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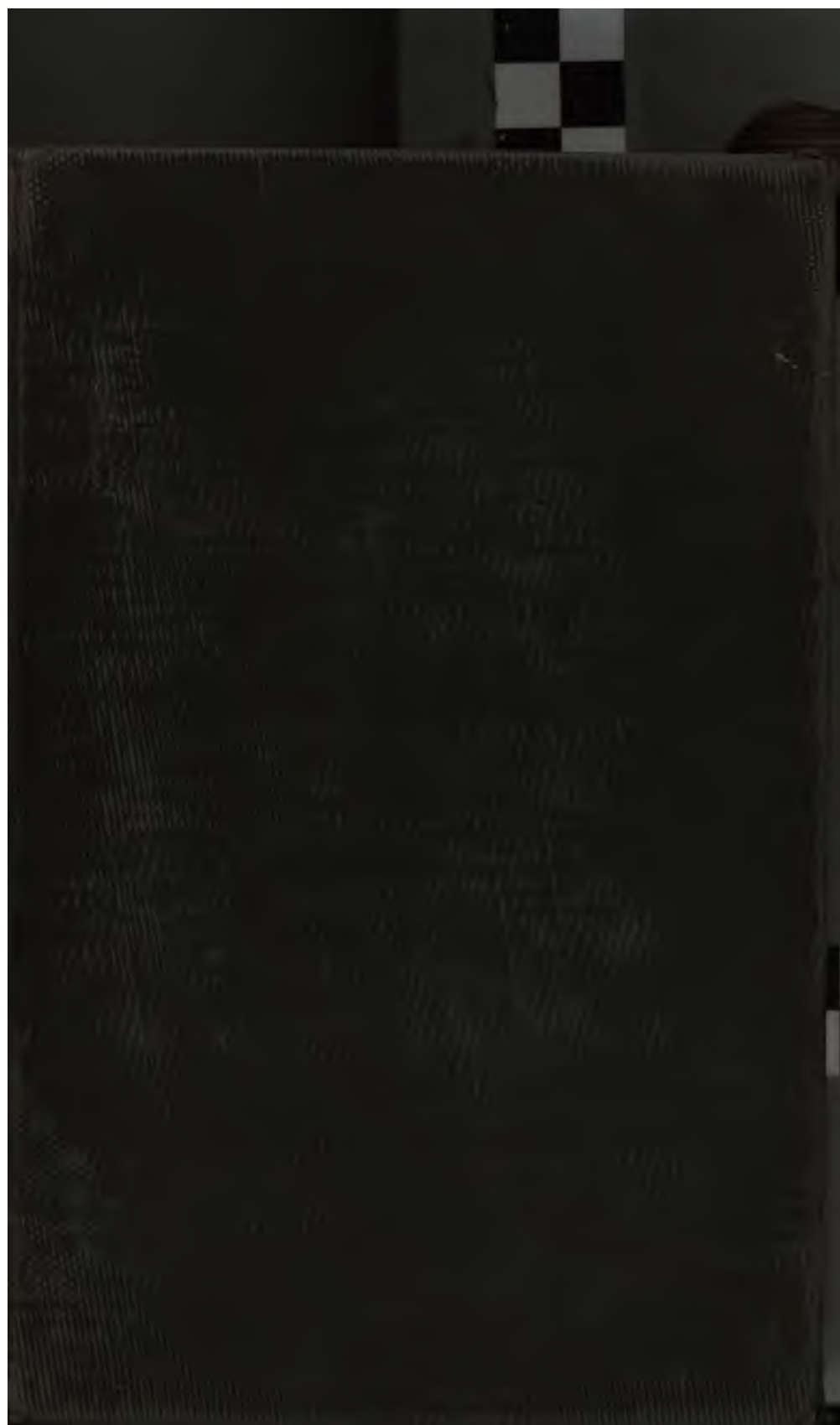
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THE LANGUAGE AND METRE OF  
CHAUCER







THE LANGUAGE  
AND  
METRE OF CHAUCER

SET FORTH BY BERNHARD TEN BRINK

*SECOND EDITION, REVISED BY*  
FRIEDRICH KLUGE

*TRANSLATED BY*  
M. BENTINCK SMITH

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Mary Ogden Fund





## PREFACE

And for ther is so greet diversitee  
In Englissh and in wrytinge of our tonge.  
So preye I God that noon miswryte thee,  
Nē thee mismetre for defaute of tonge.

THE little book herewith offered to the friends of Chaucer and of the English language is the result of several years of study not originally undertaken with a view to a publication of this nature. The grammatical and metrical outlines which form the basis of the present work were planned, and in course of time expanded and elaborated, for my own use and the benefit of those who attended my lectures. At the beginning of the present year I happened to hear that a younger colleague intended to write a Chaucer Grammar. This circumstance determined me, in the interest of a rational division of labour, to bring to light what had for years lain hidden in my desk. I, of course, at once communicated my plan to the scholar who was the unintentional occasion of my decision. From the alacrity with which he gave way to me followed the obligation, on my part, to appear before the reader



as soon as possible. But unexpected difficulties hindered the execution of a plan so easily conceived. The revision and completion of the somewhat defective MS. occupied several months; three more were spent in seeing it through the press, as, for various reasons, the printing was delayed. In this connection I should like to acknowledge the sympathy and encouragement I received from my friend Friedrich Kluge, who also assisted me in the correction of the proof-sheets.

Though deferred beyond my expectations, the appearance of this work strikes me nevertheless as premature. I could have wished to postpone the publication of a Grammar and Prosody of Chaucer until after the completion of a critical edition of his works. The preparations for such an edition have occupied me for a considerable time, but owing to lack of leisure the undertaking makes but slow progress. So long, however, as a critical edition of Chaucer's works remains a fond hope, the details of his grammatical and metrical systems will not be determined with the accuracy that might otherwise be attainable, nor will the survey as a whole be really comprehensive. Moreover, the want of such an edition presents difficulties both to the author and the thoughtful reader. The text-book, which ought to rest on a critical foundation (for otherwise though it might give specimens of forms, it would not present a picture of Chaucer's language), nevertheless disclose but little of the critical labour involved in it, and may err in being in some parts too concise and in others not concise enough. The reader, however, who frequently can not even



the necessary texts, must have either great confidence in his author, or great personal industry.

In this connection I may be permitted to make a statement on orthographical matters in particular. It goes without saying that MS. forms which the evidence of rime and metre proves to be incompatible with Chaucer's phonetic system have been removed and replaced by more appropriate ones. But even within the range of the permissible the MSS. offer so great and so bewildering a variety that some selection seemed advisable. In the chapter on Phonology it has been my endeavour to quote the examples in the orthography supported by the best evidence, a comparison of the tendencies prevailing in the most reliable MSS. of the Canterbury Tales providing the starting point for my investigations. But I have consistently and tacitly differentiated the consonants *v, j*, from the vowels *u, i*, whereas the MSS. hardly ever use the *j* symbol, and the *v* symbol chiefly initially, to denote both vowel and consonant. I have made no use of the symbol *þ* for *th*, for this reason among others, because Ellesmere and Hengwrt employ it, even as an initial, only in abbreviations. In the second and third chapters I have felt called upon to be somewhat less conservative than in the first, and to insist upon the application of certain principles of a normalised orthography for which I made some incidental suggestions in the chapter on Phonology, but I have nevertheless endeavoured to avoid startling innovations. The beginner will, I hope, be grateful to me if by means of my orthography I considerably facilitate a correct comprehension of Chaucer's word-



forms, especially the gradation-series in conjugation. Only the other day, during the perusal of the most recent numbers of our two philological periodicals, my eyes were opened to the need for such assistance. In the discussion of Inflection I have made an abundant use of diacritics; in the discussion of Metre where, in many cases, marks of another kind were required, diacritics are—with rare exceptions—used only in part of the section on rime. The reproach of temerity and inconsistency, which I shall hardly escape, will be gladly borne, if only I have been enabled to contribute somewhat to the wider diffusion, and at the same time, to the deepening, of our knowledge of Middle English speech and of Chaucer's art.

Much that is not of inferior importance remains to be said. But I prefer to postpone further remarks to the future when an occasion for them, whether peaceful or polemical, will not be wanting.

One thing must, however, not remain unexpressed here—the gratitude I owe to my predecessors in this department—to name only Tyrwhitt, Gesenius, Child, Ellis. The reader will gather from certain external analogies that Sievers' Anglo-Saxon Grammar has not remained without influence on the final form of my work, more especially on the portion treating of inflection. To these names must be added that of Furnivall, without whose publications one would hardly have ventured upon a critical examination of Chaucer's text.

BERNHARD TEN BRINK.

STRASSBURG, *October*, 1884.





## TO THE SECOND EDITION

LATER than one might have expected, a new edition of this little book has become necessary. In my capacity as editor I have treated the original form of ten Brink's work on Chaucer with the reverence due to the mature work of a master. Apart from editorial changes of a purely practical kind, I have undertaken only a few slight modernisations of the subject-matter, for which Zupitza's discussion of the book in the *Litteraturzeitung*, 1885, col. 609, had prepared the way. I felt the less called upon to disturb the fundamental views of the book, as a settlement of opinions on some points can be expected only in the future. Unfortunately, ten Brink's remains contain but few notes for a new edition. Thus the work appears almost entirely in the form which for many years has proved its value as an introduction to the language and verse of that poet whose muse laments most deeply the premature death of our teacher and master.

F. KLUGE.

FREIBURG I. B., *January*, 1899









## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE study of Chaucer is at last becoming a matter of real interest to the English-speaking peoples, and if we are gradually awakening to a sense of the importance and value of his work, and of older English literature in general, we owe it in no small measure to ten Brink's research. Even scholars who are unable to share ten Brink's opinions on all points agree that his investigations are matchless examples of profound learning and whole-hearted devotion to his subject.

My experience as a teacher proved to me, however, that in its German form ten Brink's time-honoured work on *Chaucer's Sprache und Verskunst* presented great difficulties even to students tolerably conversant with the German language, and that, if it were to be used with advantage to any considerable extent, these difficulties must be removed by an English version. I have, therefore, ventured to undertake the present translation, in the hope of making the average English student more familiar with this valuable book.

The rendering of certain technical terms from German into English is often no easy matter. Yet



I cannot think it desirable to shirk the difficulty by retaining the more familiar German expressions. I have therefore endeavoured, as far as possible, to extract from our slender English vocabulary of grammatical and metrical terms equivalents for all such German words. But I have found it impossible to improve upon Schipper's suggestions (*Engl. Metrik*, vol. I. p. 318) that the metrical terms 'Aufgesang,' 'Abgesang,' 'Stollen,' 'Wende,' etc., as applied to English metre, had best be rendered by those given originally in Dante's 'De vulgari eloquentia' (cf. *Opere minori di Dante Alighieri*, ed. di Pietro Fraticelli, 1858, vol. II. p. 146 ff.), and I have, therefore, translated them by 'frons,' 'cauda,' 'pedes,' or 'versus,' as the case required.

Moreover, it seemed to me undesirable to perpetuate our probably erroneous custom of translating 'Hebung' by 'arsis,' and 'Senkung' by 'thesis.' Whenever, therefore, a more concise expression than 'stressed element,' 'unstressed element,' seemed called for, I have followed the example of two distinguished American scholars, and reversing our ordinary usage, I have rendered 'Hebung' by 'thesis,' and 'Senkung' by 'arsis' (cf. Professor White's *Introduction to the Rhythmic and Metric of the Classical Languages*, by Dr. J. H. Schmidt, and Professor Platner's translation of L. Müller's *Greek and Roman Versification*).

Further, in order to make the references throughout the book available for students who do not possess the Six-Text, I have added in square brackets the equivalent references to Skeats' *Students' Chaucer*, (Clarendon Press), and Macmillan's Globe edition of *Chaucer*.



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In conclusion I beg to express my heartiest thanks to all friends who have assisted me by valuable suggestions, more especially to Professor Kluge for the kindly interest he has taken in the translation, and to Miss E. M. Guest and Mr. A. W. Pollard, who have also helped in the revision of the proof-sheets.

M. BENTINCK SMITH.

GIRTON COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
*November, 1901.*







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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

*(Adapted by kind permission of Prof. Friedrich Kluge from the  
Shakespeare-Jahrbuch, vol. xxvii., p. 306.)*

BERNHARD TEN BRINK died on January 29th, 1892. The sudden and unexpected death of this eminent scholar in the midst of work much of which was but half-accomplished or merely planned, was a serious blow to English philology.

By birth a Dutchman, ten Brink had spent his childhood in Amsterdam, his early youth in Düsseldorf and Essen. From his student days onwards Germany became his permanent home: he considered himself a German, and took a keen interest in national and political questions.

This assimilation of German character and of German habits of thought was the fundamental cause of his thoroughly German style. But few foreigners have attained to the mastery of German that ten Brink possessed—the name of Chamisso may occur to the reader—and not many German scholars handle the literary language with his consummate skill. To this fact the number of brilliant metrical versions of M.E. poems scattered throughout his *History of English Literature* would bear sufficient testimony, were not the monumental torso



of this very History an additional proof. This command of the German language was acquired in long years of serious work. Dutch, his mother-tongue, yielded to German in the years which he spent as a student at Bonn, though even in the early seventies a Dutch word is said to have escaped him now and again in lecture.

From the year 1873 onwards, ten Brink was Professor of English Language and Literature at the then recently founded University of Strassburg, having previously lectured on English and Romance Philology at Münster and Strassburg. He owed this distinguished position in the first instance to his *Chaucerstudien* which had appeared in 1870, but by the publication of other valuable works, his power as a teacher, and his unusual rhetorical gifts, he invested his office with increasing dignity up to the day of his untimely death.

The work of his life, his History of English Literature, was produced in Strassburg. So far as it was published during his life-time, it is a sketch of England's poets and poetry from the days of Hengest and Horsa up to the time immediately preceding the establishment of the printing-press in England. Though the area occupied by the English language within that period is a limited one, yet it makes manifold demands upon the historian of literature who aims at tracing the intellectual development of the nation upon the massive background of its political growth. In the first thousand years of English history, this sea-girt kingdom reflects the most varied influences, to understand and do justice to which requires a



width and depth of scientific training, such as only ten Brink possessed. His sketch of the Middle Ages, in which the clergy took so prominent a part in literature, is admirable for its profound sympathy with the religious life of an age so far removed from our own, as well as for its objective appreciation of the English reformer. More striking even than his theological knowledge is, however, the scope and thoroughness of his acquaintance with Romance and Classical literature: on one page we may find the development of the Renaissance in England introduced by character sketches of the great Italian poets, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; on another, sketches of the French originals of M.E. poems, whilst the whole book is interspersed with side-glances upon ancient and modern literature, and hints on poetry and art in general.

This task was, moreover, a peculiarly difficult one for the Strassburg Professor, in so far as it undoubtedly put a severe curb on his personal inclinations. Ten Brink was ever and again attracted by the scientific monograph, and had always cherished a plan of writing a series of such essays on special subjects, a plan which was, however, forced to give place to the real work of his life. But every specimen, and every poet, treated in his *History of English Literature* had been made the subject of special research, and thus he forestalled the conclusions of many monographs, lest he should yield unduly to his fondness for the scientific treatment of detail. He is hence at all points able to act as guide to fellow-students and pupils, with-



out losing sight of the main object of his work, namely, by artistic treatment and artistic economy, to draw the attention of wider circles to a subject which, though at first unattractive, attains to supreme interest in the persons of Wiclif and Chaucer and in the growth of the English drama. A delicate power of historical appreciation greatly furthered this object: ten Brink felt equally happy and at home in the semi-precious style of the older alliterative poetry and in the labyrinth of allegorical epics and dramas, and the sympathy which he felt for the religious epic and the most artistic love-song was given in like measure to the simplest effusion of the folk-song.

In the first volume of the *History of English Literature* ten Brink is perhaps too exclusively a philologist; he is apt to discuss specimens of literature which have a purely philological value. The second volume emphasises only important personalities and important movements in literature, and his sketch of Chaucer probably marks the climax of his work so far as it was published during his life-time. He had planned a monumental edition of the poet's works; indeed, his remains contained no unprinted matter of an editorial character save such as he had devoted to this purpose. It was upon Chaucer also that he lavished the full wealth of his linguistic and metrical knowledge and power. Chaucer was the touchstone of ten Brink's versatility, and much as he had already done for him, he could and would have done more in the future.

The relation between the poet and the scholar



had become, as it were, a personal one, and to work on his behalf seemed almost the service and duty of a friend. Traits of character which he shared with Chaucer attracted the modern scholar to the mediæval poet: humour and playful fancy, a light heart, an ideal conception of life, a serious purpose coupled with a deep sense of responsibility for its fulfilment, honesty, candour, a cultured appreciation of form, and wealth of idea, were common to both.

In this connection we can but briefly refer to the lectures on Shakespeare which from about 1885 onwards ten Brink was in the habit of delivering either before an academic audience or an educated general public. They were published after his death, and there is no doubt that had it been granted to ten Brink to fix the final outlines of the character of the greatest Englishman, we should have been presented with a work marked equally by rigid philological argument and by an artistic appreciation of the poet and his development.

We may briefly also refer to ten Brink's devotion to the great popular productions of English literature. The O.E. *Béowulf* stood in the forefront of his interests during the last years of his life, and he attempted in his own original way to fathom the birth and growth of the popular epic, a one-sided treatment of which according to some stereotyped method had for long years encumbered the science of literature.

Yet withal ten Brink was no pedantic devotee of learning. His memory will long remain green not only as a distinguished scholar, but as a distinguished man. He served learning, his family,



and his friends with the love and devotion which spring from a pure heart. He defended his convictions with courage and energy, but also with kindness and charity. Without striving for influence, he possessed it; without creating a school, he was a dominating and potent force in the world of letters.





## INTRODUCTION

DURING the early centuries after the Norman Conquest the English dialects, of which each in turn seems to claim a certain pre-eminence in literature, are seen to be undergoing a development which in each one severally tends apparently towards a more complete differentiation from the others, and a more emphatic accentuation of its distinguishing characteristics. This period, characterised by the prevalence of centrifugal tendencies, is succeeded in the second half of the 14th century by an epoch in which the foundation for future unity is laid. About the time when in the adjoining kingdom of Scotland a branch of the northern dialect attains to the dignity of a national language, the beginnings of a common literary language are discernible in England. Scotch, whose first classical representative is Barbour, was scarcely able to maintain its position unimpaired for three centuries. Literary English, on the other hand, from the reign of Edward III. to the present day, can look back upon a continuous development, which, in spite of an occasional change of direction, has never been interrupted or violently forced into a new channel. In course of time it has subjected to



itself not only the British Isles, but a large portion of the inhabited world, and has, moreover, helped to add to the intellectual possessions of mankind treasures of such kind that its importance for the culture of the world now seems independent even of the continuance of the mighty empire over which its extension is increasing, and of the no less important federation of autonomous colonies in which it is the prevailing speech.

The home of the language born for so great a destiny was on the banks of the Thames. From a union of Midland and Southern dialects there sprang more than 500 years ago that literary English, the origin of which is still clearly perceptible in the language of modern English, as well as of American, writers and speakers.

Two districts watered by the Thames claim alike to have exercised the deeper influence on the unification of English speech : Oxford on the one hand, London, with Westminster, Windsor, and other Royal residences, on the other. The opinion of scholars called upon to decide who really coined the literary language of England and secured its extension, wavers between the names of two distinguished authors of the 14th century : Wiclif and Chaucer.

He who deliberately and without bias weighs the criteria by which the question must be decided, will soon attain to a standpoint from which the controversy seems superfluous and futile. He will be able to appreciate the peculiar merit of each of these two great men in the unification of English speech, but he will be unable to close his mind to the conviction that to Chaucer alone the honour is due of being



esteemed the first and supreme classic of the literary language then in its infancy.

The English language was a gift to English literature not from the learning of the university, but from the great capital and the Royal Court. Not the Yorkshireman living far from his home, but the Londoner, who remained in permanent and close contact with the place of his birth, stamped the language with the impress of his mind. Wiclif was a great theologian, an acute logician, a man imbued with deep religious and patriotic feeling, but the form of his work was to him of secondary importance as compared with its substance, and therefore he never completely grasped the secret of form ; he was never really triumphant in the struggle, for literary expression. Chaucer was, and remained until the appearance of Shakespeare, the most consummate master of language amongst English poets, one of the few in whom art and nature, form and substance, are in absolute harmony, indeed, appear to be one. It was in the last years of his life that Wiclif began to write in English ; he never wholly abandoned Latin, and the English he wrote was not his native dialect. Chaucer, from his earliest years, wrote and composed poetry in his mother tongue, and so far as we know, in it exclusively ; the dialect with which he was familiar at home and the English which he acquired at Court, and in intercourse with Government officials, hardly differed from each other ; in the district, linguistically considered, of which he was a native, the off-shoots of several dialects met ; the way for his own eclectic and levelling activity had been prepared by the environment in which he grew up.

*Caveat*



Wiclif's adherents were natives of different parts of England ; his collaborator in the translation of the Bible, Nicholas Hereford, wrote in a dialect that differed from Wiclif's own, and had a south-western tinge ; Purvey's revision had much the same dialectal colouring as his master's work ; the poor priests spoke each his own idiom. So far as we can trace the literary tradition inaugurated by Wiclif, it seems to move westwards rather than eastwards, *i.e.*, its direction is towards the past rather than the future. The bloody reaction which orthodoxy brought about under the Lancastrians put an end to this tradition, to the great detriment of English prose. On the other hand the literary movement which received its impulse from Chaucer maintains an uninterrupted course throughout the 15th and 16th centuries. His example dominates art-poetry, and even the Renaissance rather emphasised than checked the effect of his writings. At critical moments—we need consider only Caxton—he must be held to have exercised an important influence even on prose. And far-reaching as was the influence of his art, the effect produced by his language was co-extensive with it. Gower, a native of Kent, writes his *Confessio Amantis* in a dialect which, despite many Kenticisms, resembles, on the whole, Chaucer's idiom far more closely than that of his own countrymen. Occleve was a Londoner, like the master he so passionately revered. Lydgate, the recognised head of the Chaucer school, and of poetry in the 15th century, was a native of Suffolk. His language is built upon the foundation laid by Chaucer, but has a deeper East-Midland tinge, and is therefore typical for the



further course of development. It is chiefly in the east of England, with a tendency towards the north, that, in the critical period of transition, literary tradition is propagated. Stephen Hawes, with whom mediæval poetry stands on the threshold of a new era, was, like Lydgate, a Suffolk man. Skelton, whose bold originality relieves the monotony of a decadent art, was a native of Norfolk and had manifold connections with Northumberland. It seems superfluous to continue such considerations, since the results of the historical process are patent.

In all essential features Modern English more closely resembles Chaucer's language than Wiclif's. In so far also as the relation of modern literary English to English dialects is concerned, it is more closely akin to the language of Chaucer, and more remote from the language of Wiclif. And thus the conclusions we have arrived at may be summarised as follows:—Wiclif prepared great masses of the people for the reception of a common literary language, but Chaucer is the author of the literary movement to which this language owed its development during the succeeding centuries.

The following is an attempt to present the idiom of our great poet from two points of view only:—phonology and accidence. Both, but especially the former, clearly define the relationship of this idiom to the dialects. The conclusion we shall arrive at is that Chaucer's language belongs essentially to the East-Midland dialect-group, but contains a fairly large admixture of South-Eastern elements. The dialects of the three principal tribes which transformed England into a Germanic country are all represented



here: Anglian, as well as Saxon and Jutish; but just as the peculiar character which English assumed in the mouth of North-Anglian tribes has remained practically without influence upon the poet's speech, so, on the other hand, it reveals few traces of West-Saxon influence. An investigation of this relationship in greater detail would necessitate a history of English dialects such as cannot be given here.

Chaucer's work was no less important for the evolution of metre than for the development of the language. English poetry owes its classical metre to him, and, moreover, both directly and indirectly, more than one very important strophic structure. Above all he taught his fellow-countrymen the secret upon which depended the future of English versification; the art of harmoniously linking—not intermixing—the Germanic and Romance methods—the accentual and the syllabic. To present Chaucer's versification in conjunction with his language seemed the more expedient, since the one cannot be grasped without a knowledge of the other.

Hence Chaucer's poetical works are naturally the primary source even of the linguistic part of this enquiry, whilst the prose works have only been noticed incidentally. Chaucer is himself only in verse, only there is he original and national, and only there he affords definite criteria by which we can separate that which is peculiar to himself from the disfiguring husk of tradition.

With one exception, all Chaucer's works are now contained in the Publications of the Chaucer Society in a form convenient for purposes of research. I have made use of these publications, and quoted according



to them; in all doubtful cases in the Canterbury Tales, I have taken Morris's reprint of MS. Harl. 7334 into consideration, in addition to the Six-Text, without binding myself by Morris's numbering of the lines. For the Clerkes Tale, the careful reprint from MS. Cambr. Univ. Dd. 4. 24, by W. A. Wright, 1867, has occasionally been of value.

As a rule, I cite the Six-Text of the Canterbury Tales (= ST) according to the number of the page and line, *e.g.* S.T. 4/108 or simply 4/108, as a confusion is sufficiently guarded against by this method of reference. For the prose portions I quote according to page and paragraph; the Troilus by book and line, *e.g.* Troilus or Troil. I. 340, the remaining poems by the line number. Abbreviations as Blaunche (= Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse or Book of the Duchesse), Parlement (= Parlement of Foules), Fame (= Hous of Fame), Legende or Leg. (Legende of goode Women), Mars, Venus (= Complaynte of M., Complaynte of V.), Scogan, Bukton, etc., will present no difficulty to the reader; the Treatise on the Astrolabe, ed. Skeat (= Astrol.), I cite according to paragraph and line.

For the Boece I have used the edition by Morris (London, 1868, E.E.T.S.) which numbers the lines consecutively.

Works which have been erroneously attributed to our poet, as well as such as have been ascribed to him by some on insufficient grounds, could not be taken into consideration in this investigation. So far as poems are in question, we have restricted ourselves to such material as is printed by Furnivall in the Parallel-Text Editions of the Ch. Soc.





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## ABBREVIATIONS

Acc.	=accusative.	Gæl.	=Gælic.
Adj.	=adjective.	Gen.	=genitive.
Adv.	=adverb.	Germ., Germ <sup>c</sup>	=Germanic.
A.f.d.A.	=Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum.	Goth.	=Gothic.
Ags.	=Anglo-Saxon.	Grdr.	=Paul, Grundriss der germ. Philologie.
Angl.	=Anglian.	Grk.	=Greek.
Angl.	=Anglia.		
Angl. Anz.	=Anzeiger zur Anglia.	Ind.	=indicative.
Bret.	=Breton.	Indef. Art.	=indefinite article.
Ch.	=Chaucer.	Inf.	=infinitive.
Conj.	=conjunctive.	Ital.	=Italian.
C.T.	=Canterbury Tales	Kent.	=Kentish.
D., Dat.	=dative.	Lat.	=Latin.
Dan.	=Danish.	Lay.	=Lazamon.
Def. Art.	=definite article.	Lg.	=Low German.
Deut. Litztg.	=Deutsche Littera- turzeitung.	Litt. Zeitg.	=Deutsche Littera- turzeitung.
E.St.	=Englische Studien.	Mätzner	=Mätzner, Englische Grammatik.
Engl. Stud.	=Englische Studien.	Masc.	=masculine.
E.E.P.	=Ellis, Early English Pronunciation.	Mdu.	=Middle Dutch.
Fem.	=feminine.	M.E.	=Middle English.
Fr.	=French.	Mhg.	=Middle High Ger- man.
Fris.	=Frisian.	M.Lat.	=Middle Latin.



Mlg.	= Middle Low German.	Pers.	= person.
Mod. Fr.	= Modern French.	Pers. Pron.	= personal pronoun.
N.	= note.	phon.	= phonetically.
N.	= noun.	Pic.	= Picard.
N.E.	= New English.	Pl.	= plural.
N.E.D.	= New English Dictionary.	Pres.	= present.
Neut.	= neuter.	Pret.	= preterite.
North.	= Northumbrian.	Rom.	= Romance.
O. Angl.	= Old Anglian.	S.	= substantive.
Odu.	= Old Dutch.	Schipper	= Schipper's English Metrik.
O.E.	= Old English.	Sg., Sing.	= singular.
O.Fr., O.Fris.	= Old Frisian.	S.T.	= Six-Text.
Ohg.	= Old High German.	Stratmann	= Stratmann's Middle English Dictionary.
O.Kt.	= Old Kentish.	Swed.	= Swedish.
Olg.	= Old Low German.	V.	= verb.
O.N.	= Old Norse.	Voc.	= vocative.
orig.	= originally.	W.	= Welsh.
Orig. Norse	= Original Norse.	West Germ <sup>c</sup>	= West Germanic.
O.W.S.	= Old West Saxon	W.S.	= West Saxon.
P.P.	= past participle.		
P.B.B.	= Paul und Braune's Beiträge.		





## CHAPTER I.

### PHONOLOGY.

#### 1. THE VOWELS.

1. THE vowels will be considered from three points of view, namely: **quality** (timbre), **quantity** (duration), and **stress** (accent), these being, in many respects, mutually interdependent. Thus the timbre of some M.E. vowels is essentially determined by their quantity, the latter, again, is undoubtedly influenced by the accent. Conversely, the accentual capacity of a syllable is sometimes conditioned by the quantity of its vowel, and the quantity is not always independent of its quality.

2. In the present section the several vowels will be discussed from the point of view of **quality** under headings indicating their quantity.

3. As regards **quantity** we distinguish **short**, **long**, and **variable** vowels. The root-vowel is short, for instance, in *sitten*, *bed*, *man*, *God*, *huntene*; long in *wis*, 'wise,' *seeken*, *beren*, *taken*, *stoon*, *good*, *hous*; variable in *writen*, pret. pl. or p.p., *heven*, *fader*, *sonne* (pron. *sune*), 'son,' *dore* (pron. *dure*), 'door.' The



term variable is applied to vowels the quantity of which is intermediate between long and short. The existence of this class of sounds, the limits of which are not always easy of definition, is not acknowledged by all philologists. But it is proved, in the first place, by rimes (§ 325); in the second place, by the N.E. development of the vowels in question (§ 35), and, finally, by inferences from analogy. In order to do justice to the views of opponents, we shall, as occasion offers, state what quantity others ascribe to sounds which we designate variable.

4. The theory of **accent** will be discussed in ch. III. §§ 276-295. In this connection one observation may suffice, *i.e.* that syllables, the accent-points of which are formed by vowels (for which reason the latter also appear as the actual bearers of the accent), may be appropriately divided into originally accented syllables, syllables capable of accent, and syllables incapable of accent. Amongst originally accented syllables some always retain their accent, as the first syllable in *fader*, *heven*, the second syllable in the Romance words *estaat*, *array*; others can throw it on to an adjacent syllable—whether from merely metrical considerations, or owing to some tendency more inherent in the language—as the first syllable in *worthy*, *singinge*, *frendshipe*, the second syllable in *nature*, *resoun*, *pitee*. The adjacent syllable which, under certain circumstances, may attract the accent, is said to be capable of accent, thus the second syllable in *worthy*, *singinge*, *frendshipe*, the first in *nature*, *resoun*, *pitee*. Incapable of accent is, for example, the second syllable in *fader*, *heven*, the third in *frendshipe*, *nature*, the first in *estaat*.



With regard to actual individual cases, this classification is in contradistinction to a division into accented and unaccented syllables.

Some trisyllabic and polysyllabic words have more than one accent. In these cases the simple accent becomes differentiated into a primary stress and a weaker, secondary stress; cf. *mártyrdóm*, *créature* or *créature*. The acute accent denotes the primary stress, the grave the secondary.

Amongst monosyllables, nouns, numerals, verbs, adverbs, interjections, as well as pronouns used absolutely, or with logical emphasis, are regarded as originally tonic compared with adjacent elements in the sentence, but the juxtaposition of syllables bearing a relatively stronger accent will, of necessity, frequently reduce the weaker among them to unaccented syllables.

#### A. GERMANIC VOWELS.

5. The vowels in originally tonic syllables will, with regard to their actual accentuation, be discussed in the following order: first the short, then the long, finally the variable vowels. Genuine English words will be considered primarily, those of other origin only incidentally. Old loan-words will not be separated from words of the native stock.

#### SHORT VOWELS.

##### 6. Short are:

(a) Old short vowels in a closed syllable: *bidden*, *men*, *spak*, *fox*, *ful*.

(β) Old long vowels, when followed by a consonant group, or a long (*sc.* geminated) consonant:



*kepte, ladde; crepte, rafte.* This shortening took place even where the two consonants belonged to two different parts of a compound, the first being the final consonant of the one element, the second the initial consonant of the other: *wisdom* by the side of *wis*; *frëndshipe* beside *freñd*; *chäpman* (O.E. *cēapmon*) beside *chēpe*.

NOTE 1. Orm, writing as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century, already affords indubitable proof of this rule, which, as a matter of fact, dates from a period prior to his. In accordance with his system—a perfectly appropriate one (cf. § 97)—he doubles the final consonant of a syllable (as well as the first of two consonants terminating a word) after a short vowel, a method which he considers the only correct one (*Dedic.* 103-110), and thus he writes *wissdom* but *wis*, *chappmenn* (pl.) but *chepningbope*.

In composition this phonetic rule is, however, violated with extreme frequency by the operation of analogy. New compounds are thus differentiated from older ones, but even existing compounds are endowed with new life by the subjection of the first element to the same phonetic development as the corresponding simple word. The quantity of the stem-word seems to be determinative, especially in the development of derivatives with the suffix *-ly* (originally the second element in a compound) and *-nesse*, so that formations like *frëndly*, *siknesse*, seem almost exceptions.

NOTE 2. A necessity for differentiation not infrequently exercises some influence; thus between *gōdhēd*, 'goodhood,' and *gōdhēd*, 'Godhead,' between *wīslȳ*, 'wisely,' and *wīslȳ*, 'certainly.' It is noteworthy, for instance, that Orm writes *clennlike* (from *clēne*), but *wislīke*, *wislīȳ* (from *wīs*, 'wise'). At a later period a toneless *e* was not infrequently inserted before



-ly, among other reasons for the purpose of indicating that in words like *wisely*, *gödelly*, shortening by position was avoided. The quantity of the *i* in M.E. *siknesse* may be inferred from N.E. *sickness*, and especially from N.E. *sick* as compared with M.E. *sik*.

A phonetic exception to the rule in accordance with which originally short vowels are preserved, and originally long ones are shortened, results from the character of certain consonant combinations, and, in a more limited degree, also of single sounds. Cf. § 16 and § 35.

(γ) O.E. long vowels rarely appear shortened before single consonants, as in *ten* (by the side of *-tēne*); *us*, *but* (O.E. *ús*, *bútan*) are cases of shortening in unaccented form-words.

7. The short vowels are *i*, *e*, *a*, *o*, *u*, amongst which *i* represents the pure German *i*, as well as the N.E. sound which inclines towards *e* (as in *is*); *e* and *o*, on the other hand, always stand for open sounds. For the purpose of distinction from the corresponding closed sounds open *e* and *o* will be denoted graphically by *ɛ*, *ø*, and the impure *i* by *î*. On the *ü*-sound, which occurs sporadically, cf. § 38.

8. *i* and *î* are not graphically distinguished in M.E., nor can they be differentiated etymologically. On the whole, *î* is the rule. The pure *i*-sound seems to have been preserved only before certain consonants; it may safely be assumed before *gh* (palatal *χ*): *knight*, *light*, *night*.

9. Short *î* (or *i*) is represented in the MSS. either by *i* or by *y*: the latter symbol is used by preference, to obviate erroneous readings, when *n* or *m* precedes or follows: *myght*, *nyght*, *knyght*, *kyng*, *skyn*, etc.:



these sounds with the vocalic element of the guttural or palatal  $\chi$  has produced a diphthong: *au* or *ei*, cf. § 39 ff.

(e) O.E. *y* (= *ü*): *abegge* (: *legge*) 113/3938, [A. 3938]; *knetten*, Parl. 439, 628, Mars 183, Troilus III. 1733; *melle* (: *telle*) 113/3924, [A. 3924] and 122/4241, [A. 4241]; *Cantebregge* (: *collegge*) 115/3990, [A. 3990]; *melle* 'mill'; *cherche* (: *werche*) once 546/5.5 [G. 545]; *dent* 'blow, dint'; *thenne* 'thin' (: *renne*) 117/4065, [A. 4065]; *fulfelle* (: *telle*) Troil. III. 510. On *kessen* and *lest* cf. § 48. XI.

(ζ) O.E. *ɛ*: *grette*, *mette*, *kepte*, *bledde*.

(η) O.E. *æ* or (cf. § 50): *yspred*, *dredde*, *lesse*, *slepte*, *shepherde* (*sheep* = O.E. *scēap*, where *á* stands for *æ*, or *scēp*), *mente*, *lente*, *ylent*; cf. § 12 η and § 50.

(θ) O.E. *eo*: *crepte*, *br̥est*, *fel* (O.E. *fēoll*), *derre*, compar. to *deære* (O.E. *dēore*).

(ι) O.E. *ēa*: *betten*, pret. pl. from *bēten* 'beat,' *gretter* (O.E. *grēatra*, but also *grýtra*), compar. of *grēft*. *Edward*; cf. § 12 θ and § 50.

(κ) Sometimes O.E. *y*: *hed*, *yhed*, cf. § 50.

## 12. Sources of *ä*:

(α) O.E. *a*: *asschen*, *asse*, *cat*. Also O.N. *a*: *gabben*, *cast*, *casten*, *carl*. Mlg. *a*: *knarre*. Mlg. *a*: *labben*, etc.

(β) O.E. *a*, *o*, before resonants, with the exception of the combinations *mb*, *nd*, *ng*: *ram*, *cam*, *nam*, *swam*; *man*, *swan*, *wan* Adj., *than*, *gan*, *bigan*, *ran*, *wan*, *can*; *thank*.

NOTE 1. By the side of *nam* occurs *noom* (O.E. *nóm*); *coom*, too, is due to O.E. *cóm*, whereas *cam* is probably formed by analogy. On *on*, *from*, cf. § 58.



(e) O.E. stable  $\bar{y}$  (= long  $\ddot{u}$ ): *hyd* (phon. = *hidd* from *hidd*, O.E. *hýded*), *kyd* (from *kidd*, O.E. *cýðed*); cf. § 50.

(§) M.E.  $\bar{i}$  by monophthongisation (cf. on this subject § 21, e and § 41, Note): *highte* 'height,' *mystriste* (O.N. *treysta*), *slighte* beside *sleighte* (*sleijþe*, *slejb*, O.N. *slágd*).

NOTE 3. It may seem doubtful whether in Chaucer the quantity of  $\bar{i}$  before *gh* is correctly designated short. The original length and origin of the vowel are certainly irrelevant, and the only question is whether *gh* still retained the function of a genuine consonant or not. Now it is a fact that *gh* when protected disappears less rapidly than when final, hence a form like *plitt*, instead of *plight* is the exception in Chaucer. It may therefore be assumed that such a word as *knyght* was by Chaucer still pronounced *kniġt*, which, in consequence of the extremely palatal character of the  $\bar{\chi}$ , was in sound almost equivalent to *kniit* or *kniht*. Long before Chaucer some texts regularly have *iit* for *ight*. Cf. on this point the opinion of an accurate observer among German phoneticians, who holds that in such a German word as 'nicht,' etc., there is no  $\bar{i}$  at all; the apparent  $\bar{i}$ -sound is, he asserts, palatal  $\chi$ .

#### 11. Sources of $\bar{e}$ (short open $\bar{e}$ ):

(a) O.E.  $\bar{e}$  by  $\bar{i}$ -mutation from  $\bar{a}$ : *bed*, *helle*, *men*. Likewise the corresponding O.N. sound, e.g. *brennen*.

(β) O.E.  $\bar{e}$ ,  $\bar{eo}$ : *helpe*, *self*; *herte*, *erthe*, *erl*.

(γ) Rarely O.E.  $\bar{æ}$ : *whether*, *nesse*, for instance in *Holdernesse*; in the case of *messe* Romance influence is conceivable. Cf. § 48, III.

(δ) O.E.  $\bar{ea}$  before  $\bar{x}$ : *flex*, *wex*, and sometimes before  $\bar{r}$ -combinations, upon which cf. § 48. IV. γ.

NOTE. As to the usual representation of O.E.  $\bar{æ}$  and  $\bar{ea}$ , cf. § 12. In the combination O.E. *-eah*,  $\bar{ea}$  appears in Chaucer sometimes as  $\bar{a}$ , sometimes as  $\bar{e}$ , but in both cases the union of



these sounds with the vocalic element of the guttural or palatal  $\chi$  has produced a diphthong: *au* or *ai*, cf. § 39 ff.

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(ç) O.E. *ē*: *grette*, *mette*, *kepte*, *bledde*.

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(γ) O.E. *a*, *ea*: *al*, *alle*, *also*, *als*, *as*, *wal*, *galle*, *halle*, *stalle*, *callen*, *fallen*, *galwes*, *salwes*; *hals*; *half*; *walk*.

(δ) O.E. *ea*: *warde*, *hard*, *Edward*, *afterward*; *carf*, *starf*; *arm*, *barm*, *harm*, *warm*; *harpe*, *sharpe*; *narwe*. Before *x* only in *waxen* by the side of *wexen*; cf. § 48. IV. δ.

(ε) O.E. *æ*: *staf*, *yaf*, *craft*; *glad*, *sad*, *bad* pret.; *had*, *hadde*; *gnat*, *hat*, *that*, *what*, *sat*; *fast*, *faste*, *brast*; *bak*, *blak*, *spak*.

(ζ) O.E. *á*: *clad* (from *clādd*, O.E. *clāddōð*), *gat-toothed* (*gāt* from O.E. *gát*, that otherwise results in *gōpt*), *axe* (O.E. *áxian*, *áscian*).

(η) O.E. *æ*: *lad*, *ladde*, *dradde*, *spradde*, *adder* (O.E. *nēdre*, *nēddre*, M.E. *naddre*, *addre*), *bladder*, *ladder*; *ylaft*; *lasten* (O.E. *læstan*).

Here belong also the adj. *badde* (orig. p.p. to O.E. *bædan*) and the verb *madde*, a new formation from the adj. *mad* (orig. p.p. O.E. *mæded*).

(θ) O.E. *éa*: *yraft*; *chapman*.

NOTE 2. In exceptional cases *a* develops from O.E. *e=i*-mutation from *a*. cf. § 48, v.—The word *harre* (O.E. *heorr*, O.N. *hiarre*) probably derives its *a* from Mdu. *herre*, *harre*.

### 13. Sources of *ø*:

(α) Old stable *ø*: *God*, *ofte*; *dogge*; *flok*, *knok*, *lok*, *yok*; *shoppe*, *hoppem*; *corn*, *horn*, *biforn*, *yborn*, *lorn*, *ysworn*, *yshorn*, *torn*; *ycorve*, *ystorve*; *borwe*, *morwe*, *sorwe*; *post* (O.E. *post*, Lat. *poste-m*), *glost*; *grot*, *lot*, Scot. *stot*; *box*, *fox*. *Alofte* is based on O.N. *á lopte*.

NOTE 1. Both the verb *costen* and the corresponding substantive *cost* belong here, since, though neither of them is an old loan-word, they are not immediately derived from the Romance



(O.Fr. *coste*, *couste*, produced M.E. *couste*, which Chaucer does not use), but have found their way into English through the medium of Scandinavian or Dutch.

(β) Unstable O.E. *a, o* before *nd, ng*: *bond*, *bonde*, *brond*, *hond*, *lond*, *sonde*, *strond*; the preterites *bond*, *fond*; *fonden* (O.E. *fandian*), *stonden*; song S., *wrong* adj., *long*, *strong*; *rong* pret., *slong*, *song*, *throng*, *wrong*; *fongen*, *hongen*.

NOTE 2. For the sake of rime with a foreign word like *gerland*, Ch. seems, in exceptional cases, to consider a form like *hand* permissible, cf. S.T. 56/1930, [A. 1930], 298/4574, [B. 4574.] Being characteristic for the Northern dialect, such forms are used by the students in the Reeve's Tale. On *and*, cf. § 58.

(γ) O.E. *ó*: *softe*.

14. Short *u* is, as a rule, represented by *u*; after *w*, however, *o* is written for the sake of graphic clearness; the most reliable MSS. use the *o*-symbol also before *-nn*.

#### 15. Sources of *ü*:

(α) O.E. short *ü*: *tubbe* (Lg. *tubbe*); *tukked* (from Lg. *tucken*); *bulle*, *ful(l)*, *wolle*, *pullen*; *sonne*, *tonne*, *connen*, *bigonnen*, *yronnen*, *ywonnen*; *hunten*, *huntere*; *hunger*, *hungry*; *thus*.

(β) O.E. *o, u* from *eo* after *w* in *world*.

NOTE. Unchanged *eo* has resulted in *ē* in *werk*, *swerd* (O.E. *sweord*, *swurd*). Unusual is *soster* (O.E. *sweoster*, *swuster*), S.T. 100/3486, [A. 3486], riming with Lat. *noster*; *o=u* or *o?* The form with which Chaucer is more familiar is *sister* (O.N. *syster*).

(γ) O.E. *o* before *ll* in *dul(l)*.

(δ) O.E. *y* exceptionally before *ll*: *skulle*, *tullen*; after *w* in *wors* (but more frequently *wers*) and in



*worth*, *worthy*, *worthe* V. (= O.E. *wyrðian*), *worm* (O.E. *wyrm*), *wort* (O.E. *wyrt*); further in *muchel*, *muche* (O.E. *mycel*).

(e) Older *ú*: *buxom*; on *us* (O.E. *ús*) and *but* (O.E. *bútan*) cf. § 6 γ.

## LONG VOWELS.

## 16. Long are :

(a) Originally long vowels before a single consonant, or when final: *rīde*, *see*, *deēd*, *brōd*, *foōt*, *hou*s.

(β) Originally long vowels before *ld*, *nd*, *ng*, where, however, they occur but rarely; *heēld*, *feēnd*, *freēnd*, *heēng*; frequently before *st*: *Crist* (but *list* 'border, edge'), *breēst* (but also *brēst*), *meēst*, *moōst*, *woōst*, *doōst*. In this connection note that the length is most frequently preserved in cases where the consonant combination in question is final, or, at any rate, final in the most important of the various inflexional forms of any given word: *feēnd-feēndes*, but, on the other hand, with a variable vowel, *wende*, pret. of *wēnen*; *meest*, *moost*, from O.E. *mæst*, *mást*, but *lasten* from O.E. *lēstan*.

NOTE 1. Between *m* and *d* weak *e* is generally inserted: *deemed*, *seemed*, which then become *deemed*, *seemed*. On *rd*, cf. § 35 η.

(γ) Originally short vowels, as a rule before *-ld*: *chīld*, *feēld*, *ōld*, *gōld*; original *ȝ*, *ū*, *ȝ* (phon. *iu*) before *nd*: *bȝynden* (phon. *binden*), *bounden*, *kȝynde* (phon. *kīnde*); *ȝ*, and occasionally *a*, *o*, before *mb*: *clȝymben*, *cōmb*, *lōmb*.

(δ) Originally short vowels in an open syllable (with the exception of *i*, *u*, *y*): *bēren*, *māken*, *forlōre*.



(ε) Originally short vowels, after which a consonant has disappeared, whether contraction has taken place as in *maad* from *maked*, or compensation-lengthening, as presumably in *māde*, for *makde*, from *makede*. Also originally short vowels, after which some related consonant has become vocalised. This applies chiefly to O.E. *ɹ*: *stīle* from *stijele*, *fuwol*, *fowl* (phon. *fuēl*, *fūl*) from *fujol*—exceptionally to palatal *c* (*k'*) and *h* (*χ'*): *I* from *ic*, *plīt* from *plight*, *plīht*.

(§) Single vowels resulting from the monophthongisation of O.E. or M.E. diphthongs: *crēpen* (O.E. *crēopan*), *deęth* (O.E. *dēap*), *ȳe* from *eye*, *hīgh*, *hȳ* from *heigh*, phon. *plūh*, *plū* (spelt *plough*, *plow*) from *plouh*, and the latter from O.E. *plōχ* (spelt *plōh*).

NOTE 2. A following consonant-group reduces the vowel-lengths developing in accordance with ε and ζ, exactly as if they were originally long monophthongs.

17. If one of the consonant-groups enumerated in the preceding section, under β and γ, is followed by another consonant, the long vowel is replaced by the corresponding short one: *Crīst*, but *christnen*; *child*, but *children*; *kȳnde*, but *kȳndlen* (i.e. *kīndlen*).

18. If the following syllable concludes with a stem-formative (i.e. not an inflexional) *r* or *n*, the lengthening which should take place according to § 16, γ, δ, is prevented or impaired: *alderman*, *thonder*; *heven*, *fader* (cf. § 35, δ). It seems that, in this case, even the vowel-lengths which should be preserved in accordance with § 16, β, are generally shortened: *cristen* as compared with *Crīst*. But the vowel-lengths mentioned in § 16, α, retain their quantity: *lēęver*, *ēęver*, *mōęder*.



NOTE. The phonetic laws developed in §§ 17 and 18 are frequently violated by the operation of analogy: by the side of *feend* we find *feendly*, beside *child*, *childhede*, and so on in almost all corresponding cases (but cf. *frëndly*, *slknesse*). Thus derivatives formed by means of the suffix *-ere* (not to be confounded with the old *-er* already extinct), retain, without exception, the quantity of the root-vowel of the word from which they derive, although when the accent falls upon the root-vowel, the final *e* is regularly mute: hence, as a matter of fact, *r* concludes the syllable. The comparative suffix *-er* influences the quantity of the root-vowel only when the consonantal termination of the root has been strengthened (geminated), but, in this case, it affects equally originally long vowels of every category: for instance, *leever*, *kýnder*, but *gretter* (and hence, by analogy, *grettest*), from *greet*; cf. hereon, § 244.

19. Much the same effect as that produced by final stem-formative *r*, *n* results from *y* as the vowel of a following syllable: *body*, *many*, *peny*. An originally long vowel remains, as a rule, apparently uninfluenced by *y*, for instance, *lādy*, unless perhaps when *n* precedes the *y*; at any rate, the quantity of *eny* (O.E. *ænij*) for which the MSS. not infrequently have *any*, seems doubtful.

20. The long vowels are *ī ē ē ā ō ō ū*.

21. Sources of *ī*:

(α) Old *ī*: *lȳf*, *līk*, *wȳs*, *rȳde*, *write*; *Crist*.

(β) Stable O.E. *ȳ* (*i*-mutation of *ū*): *hȳde*, *prȳde*, *drȳe*, 'dry' (O.E. *drȳje*, cf. *drūjod̄*, 'drought'); *fȳr*. Here belongs also *kīthe*, *līte*, 'little'; cf. P.B.B. ix. 365.

(γ) Old *ī* followed by the consonant-groups *ld*, *nd*, *mb*, which produce length: *child*, *mild*, *wild*; *wȳnd*, *blȳnd*, *bihȳnde*, *bȳnden*, *fȳnden*, *grȳnden*, *wȳnden*, *chȳmbe* (Mdu. *kimme*), *chȳmben* (Swed. *kimba*), *clȳmben*.



Also old stable *y* before *nd*: *mȳnde*, *kȳnde* (O.E. *cynd*), *kȳnde* (O.E. *cynde*).

(ð) Old *i* before a palatal that has disappeared or become vocalised. *I*; *plīt*; *stīle* (O.E. *stīele*) *tīle*, (O.E. *tīele*, and, according to Pogatscher, also O.E. *tījel*), *tīthes*, 'tithes' (O.E. *tīþōða*); *lȳest* (O.E. *lījest*, 'thou liest'), *ywriȳen* (O.E. *ȳewriȳen*); also old *ȳ* before *ȝ*: *lȳe* (O.E. *lȳe*),<sup>1</sup> *abyest* (O.E. *ābyjest*, 'thou buyest, payest'). M.E. *hȳen*, 'hasten, hie,' is O.E. *hīgian* (O.E. *ī* on account of Orm's subst. *hīh*, 'haste').

NOTE 1. Forms like *lyen* (O.E. *licȳan*), *abyen* (O.E. *abyȳan*) are by analogy with forms like *lyest*, *abyest*; strict phonetic development must have produced in Chaucer forms like *ligge*, *abigge* (*gg*=N.E. *dg*); cf. §114. A phonetically correct equivalent for *ābyȳan* which actually occurs in Chaucer is *abeggen*, by the side of which the analogy formation *abeyen*.

(e) A monophthongisation of (1) the O.E. diphthong *io*, *eo*. This diphthong has generally been transmitted in the form *eo*, and has resulted in *ē*; but *ī* appears in *sīk*, 'sick,' by the side of more frequent *seek*, and regularly before following *ȝ*: *flȳen* (O.E. *flēoȳan*), *flȳe* (*flēoȳe*), *drȳen* (O.E. *drēoȳan*), *lȳen* (O.E. *lēoȳan*). (2) Related Germanic diphthongs, for instance, Olg. *eo*, *to*: *skȳ*, Mhg. *ie*: *smȳlen* (?). (3) The M.E. diphthong *ei*, upon which cf. § 41: *ȳe* from M.E. *eie* (O.E. *ēaje*, *ēje*), *slīgh*, *slȳe*, *slȳ* from *sleigh* (O.N. *slægr*), *dȳen* beside *deyen*, (O.Fris. *dēja*, O.N. *dōyja*), *hīgh* *hȳ* (from *heigh*, O.E. *hēah*, more correctly *hēh*), *sȳ* by the side of *say* (from *seigh*, O.E. *seah*, *sēh*, *seh*).

<sup>1</sup> In consequence of the diverging use of the same symbols in O.E. and in M.E., it may be as well to point out in this connection somewhat more fully the links in the development of *lȳe* to *ly*, namely: *lūȳe*, *līȳe*, *liie*, *lie*.



NOTE 2. The cases mentioned under 1, 1 and 3, cannot be accurately differentiated. A form like *dryen*, for instance, may very possibly have developed from *dreyen*, which is frequent in M.E., though it does not occur in Chaucer.

22. Like short *i*, long *i* is represented sometimes by *i* and sometimes by *y*. But *y* is a far more frequent symbol for long *i*. It alternates initially with *I*, and seems to be avoided only before certain consonants (such as *k* and *th*). Some scribes, too, betray an inclination to differentiate forms identical in sound but differing in meaning, by a distinction in the use of these symbols. In normalised texts it would be desirable, following the example of Bradshaw (cf. the transcribed passages in *The Skeleton of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, London and Cambridge, 1868), to employ the symbol *y* exclusively for long *i*, and the symbol *i* exclusively for short *i*. The familiar symbol *I*, which is also the more usual one in the better Chaucer MSS., might appropriately be retained only for the first pers. pron.

### 23. Sources of *ē*:

(a) O.E. *ē*: *bēche* 'beech,' *sēche sēke* 'seek'; *glēde*, *hēde*, *stēde*; *fēle* 'feel'; *dēme*, *sēme*, *quēme*; *queēne*, *wēne* 'believe, ween'; *fēng*, *hēng*; *slēp* 'slept'; *fēere* (in *fēere y fēere*), *hēer(e)* 'here'; *gēes* 'geese,' *chēse* 'cheese' (O.E. *cēse cýse*); *fēet* 'feet,' *sweēte* 'sweet,' *bēete* 'beat, poke,' *grēte* 'greet,' *mēete* 'meet'; *tēeth* 'teeth'; *rēve* (O.E. *jerífa*), *Ēve* (O.E. *Ēfe*); *mē*, *thē*, *hē*, *yē*. Here belongs also O.E. *ē* as *i*-mutation from Germanic *au* (where the O.W.S. dialect has *īe, y*): *ēche* 'increase,' *hēere* 'hear,' *lēve*, *bileve* 'believe,' *slēve* 'sleeve,' also O.E. *īe, y* in *nēer* O.E. *nȳr* (by the side of *nēar*).



(β) O.E. *ē* by group-lengthening before *ld*: *fēeld*, *sheeld*, *seelde*, cf. § 35, e.

(γ) O.E. *ēo*: *bēe*, *knee*, *tree*, *free*; *beēn*, *fleēn*, *seēn*; *theef*, *leef* 'dear lief'; *seek* (more frequent than *sik*) 'sick'; *heeld* 'held'; *fēend*, *freēnd*; *leep* 'lept,' *weep* 'wept,' *deer* 'deer,' *deere* 'dear,' *reēsen* (O.E. *hrēosan*), *cheēsen* 'choose,' *breēst* (by the side of *brēst*), *preēst*. Also the related diphthong of other Germanic dialects, e.g. *mēēke* (O.N. *mjúkr*).

NOTE. In exceptional cases Kentish *ē* occurs in Ch. for O.E. *y*, the usual representative of which is *ī*: *fēer*, Troil. I. 229; III. 978, by the side of the ordinary *fyr*. On the other hand, *veēze* S., which is probably deduced from the O.E. verb *fysan*, *fēsan* (= O.Swed. *föysa*) should be accounted for analogously to *heēre*, *sleēve*. On *ē* in words like *eelde*, *weelde*, cf. § 35, e.

(δ) M.E. *ē* when final: thus by the side of *sleēn* inf. (O.E. *slēan*) the apocopated form *slee*, and the verb inflects in the pres. ind. *slee*, *sleest*, *sleeth*, pl. *sleēn*, *slee*.

#### 24. Sources of *ē*:

(a) O.E. *æ*: *deēl*, *ēer*, *lēss* in *nathelēss*, *lēeste*, *mēest*; *seēd*, *threēd*, *fēere* 'fear,' *breēth* 'breath,' *shēthe* 'sheath' (O.E. *scæð* *scéað*), *unshēthen*, *gēeth* 'he goes,' Leg. 2145. Excepting when the vowel is final: *sēē* (O.E. *sæ*) always with closed *ē*.

NOTE 1. Instead of *gēeth* Chaucer generally uses *gooth*, which may be accounted for by analogy: O.E. *gā*, *gāst*, *gāð*, pl. *gāt*, in Chaucer *gū*, *gōgst*, *gōoth*, Pl. *gōon*.

(β) O.E. *ē*, or mutation-*e*, in an open syllable: *stēde* 'place, stead'; *brēken*, *spēken*, *wrēken*; *bēre* 'bear,' *spēre*, *bēren*, *dēren* 'injure,' *ēren* 'plough,' *swēren*, *tēren*, *wēren*, 'defend,' *wēren* 'wear'; *mēte* 'meat,'



*ēten*; *aswēved* p.p. Likewise O.N. *ē*: *gēten*. Also *e* from O.E. *γ* in an open syllable: *stēren* (O.E. *styrian*, N.E. to stir), which is confirmed by rimes, Fame 567, 817 [Globe, Fame II. 59], Troil. IV. 1451.

Further O.E. *ea* in an open syllable: *gēre*.

NOTE 2. Mlg. *u* produces *ē* in *beer* (*pilwebeer*) from *būre* 'cover, slip.'

(γ) Monophthongisation of O.E. *ea*: *brēed*, *lēed*, *dēed* 'dead,' *rēed* 'red,' *toshređen*; *dēef*; *Chēpe*, *heep*, *steep*, *lēpen*, *thređen*, *beem*, *dreem*, *streem*, *ēere* 'ear,' *ēre* 'ear of corn,' *tēere* 'tear'; *lēps* 'falsehood, deception,' *lēss* 'he lost,' *ēest*; *greēt*, *bēten* 'beat,' *threten*; *dēeth* 'death,' *slēeth* 'he slays'; *hēved*, Fame 550 [Globe, Fame II. 42], instead of which generally the contracted form *heep*, *rēven*.

NOTE 3. Before palatals O.E. *ea* becomes *ē* in Anglian. Chaucer's language shows evident traces of this old monophthongisation, in the first place, in the younger monophthongisation of *ei* to *ī* (*ye* from *eie*, O.E. *ēaje*, Angl. *ēje*, cf. § 41, Note), and further, in the form *ēke* by the side of *ēek* (O.E. *ēac*).

**25. Fluctuation between *ē* and *ē̄*.** We have seen that O.E. *æ* is represented in M.E. by *ē̄*, O.E. *ē*, on the other hand, by *ē̄*. Anglian and Kentish *ē* occurs, however, frequently in O.E. by the side of W.S. *æ*. We may therefore expect to find in Chaucer doublets with *ē̄* and *ē̄*, and, as a matter of fact, these occur in great numbers: (1) particularly in the case of words, the O.E. *æ* of which traces back to West Germ. *ā*—Germ. Goth. *ē*:—*spēche*; *deed*, *drēde* 'dread,' *mēde* 'meadow,' *drēden*, *rēden*; *chēke* (O.E. *cedce* for *cesēce* Mdu. *cāke*, but also O.E. *cēoce*); *sleep*, *slēpen* 'sleep'; *yeer*, *heer* 'hair';



*beere* 'bier'; *thēre*, *whēre*, *bēren* 'they bore'; *wēren*, *wēre* 'they were,' 'he were'; *streete*, *weete* 'wet'; *lēten*, *eet*, *eeten* 'he ate,' 'they ate'; *seeten* 'they sat'; *ēve* 'evening.' Amongst these words some, like *deed*, *yeer*, occur frequently either with  $\bar{e}$  or  $\bar{e}$ ; others, like *drede*, *sleep*, *slēpen*, generally have the closed sound, whereas *rēden*, *wēre(n)*, and *thēre*, have the open one; *wēre(n)*, which occurs frequently in rime, appears only a few times, *there* only once, Leg. 1870, with closed  $\bar{e}$ ; *chēke* (for which in O.E. also *cēoce*) almost always with  $\bar{e}$ , but *chēkes*, S.T. 18/633 [A. 633]. The words *lēche* 'leech,' 'physician'; *eel*, *sheep*, *meete* 'meet, suitable' (also *mēte*, 'measure') are found only with  $\bar{e}$ , which may, however, be accidental, as they occur but rarely. All other words belonging to this category either appear exclusively in the  $\bar{e}$ -form, or are doubtful; (2) in a more limited degree in the case of words the O.E.  $\text{æ}$  of which is due to *i*-mutation from Germ. *ai*. The great majority of these words, like *tēchen*, *brēde* 'breadth'; *sprēden*, *heele* 'salvation'; *deelen*, *heeste*, *heete* 'heat,' *whēte*, *spēten*, *swēten*, *heeth*, *lēve*, *bilēve*, *blēve* 'stay behind, remain,' seem to occur only with the  $\bar{e}$ -sound, and only a few, like *lēden* 'lead,' *clēne*, *lēne*, *mēnen*, *leeren*, also occur with closed  $\bar{e}$ ,  $\bar{e}vere$  and  $\bar{n}ēvere$  exclusively with the latter. Open  $\bar{e}$  exclusively in *meeste* (O.E. *mæst*), cf. § 29  $\beta$ . Other words with a variable *e* are *need*, generally  $\bar{e}$  (O.E. *nēd*, *nȳd*), but *negd*, *Blaunche*, 1253 [1252] (O.E. *nēad*); *steel*, *stēle*, with  $\bar{e}$  and  $\bar{e}$  (O.E. *stīele*, *stīle*, could correctly only have resulted in *stīle*); *grēve*, of uncertain origin, generally  $\bar{e}$ , but also  $\bar{e}$ ; *heete*, *biheete* with  $\bar{e}$  and  $\bar{e}$  from the Fris., Mlg. or Mdu.



NOTE. If *lêve* 'leave,' and *bi lêve* 'belief,' have forms with  $\bar{e}$ , as well as such with  $\bar{e}$ , this is probably due to the influence of the verbs *leeven*, *bileeven* 'believe,' which, correctly, have only  $\bar{e}$  (§ 23 a). The pret. sing. *beer* with  $\bar{e}$  or  $\bar{e}$ , by the side of the correct form *bar*, is formed by analogy with the pl. *beren*. In the same manner *seet*, S.T. 50/2075 [A. 2075], Blaunche, 501 [500],—instead of the original *sat*—is deduced from *seeten*. An analogy formation of a different character, but also due to the type *beren*, is the pl. *were(n)*—for *wered(en)*—which occurs S.T. 84/2948 [A. 2948], in an  $\bar{e}$ -rime; the form may, however, also be treated as a present.

26. The two sounds  $\bar{e}$  and  $\bar{e}$  are represented either by *ee* or by *e*. The best MSS. of the *C.T.* generally have *ee* in a closed syllable, but *er*, *ther* (by the side of *theer* or *there*) are a frequent exception. In open syllables *e* occurs not infrequently, but more usually as the symbol for  $\bar{e}$  than for  $\bar{e}$ . This is due to the fact that originally short vowels, when final in a syllable, are represented by a simple symbol and are open, and hence long open  $\bar{e}$  which goes back to an original vowel-length, derives its spelling from analogy with these. This tendency which, in the case of the old scribes, is crossed by a desire to differentiate homonyms, as well as by other more incidental considerations, might appropriately constitute the principle of a normalised orthography, and if used in conjunction with the diacritic, would afford an easy means of complying with phonetic requirements. It would then be incumbent upon us to use, in a closed syllable, either *ee* ( $\bar{e}$ ) or *ee*, in an open one *ee* ( $\bar{e}$ ) or *e*( $\bar{e}$ ), according to the respective quality of the sound.

#### 27. Sources of $\bar{a}$ :

(a) Old *ā* in the language of the Northumbrian students of the Reeve's Tale: *swā* (: *fra*), S.T.



116/4039 [A. 4039], *raa* (: *alswā*), 117/4085 [A. 4085], *atānes* (: *bānes*), 117/4073 [A. 4073], *bāthe* (: *lāthe*), 117/4087 [A. 4087]. In Chaucer's own dialect old *ā* is represented by *ē*, cf. § 29 *a*; *Ā* as interjection, and as the name for the letter.

(β) The O.E. representative of Germ. *a* in an open syllable, hence (1) O.E. *ǣ*: *spāde*, *bāken*, *awāken*, *māken*, *smāle* (O.E. *smāla*, *smālan*, *smāle*, whereas *smāl* = O.E. *smæl*), *āpe*, *hāre*, *amāsen* (O.E. *āmāsian*), *knāve*; *cāre* (O.E. *cāru*); (2) O.E. *ǣ*, *ø*: *nāme*, *vāne*; (3) O.E. *ea*: *āle*, *bāle*. O.E. *æ*, the chief source for M.E. *ǣ*, need hardly be considered in connection with *ā*, for in words like *fader* (O.E. *fæder*), *water* (O.E. *wæter*), the final *r* has prevented the complete lengthening of the *a* (cf. § 35β, also § 18), whilst forms like *dāle*, *gāte*, do not trace back to O.E. *dæl*, *jeat*, (i.e. *fæt*), but rather to the O.E. plurals *dālu*, *jātu*, *jeatu* (i.e. *jatu*); cf. Zupitza, A. f.d. A. II. 11. Further, the *ǣ* of other Germanic languages: *tāke* (O.N. *tāka*); *hāte* (by the side of O.E. *hēte*) is Mdu. *hate* [or rather, according to Litt. Zeitg. 1885, col. 609, it has been influenced by the verb M.E. *hāten*, O.E. *hātian*].

NOTE. In some cases the M.E. word may be derived from an O.E. word that has not been transmitted, cf. *gāsen*, *gāzen*, perhaps also *crāsen* (cf. Dan. *krasa*, Swed. *krasa*).

(γ) *a* or *æ*, after which a consonant has been dropped, causing compensation-lengthening, or contraction; *ē* has disappeared in *made*, pret.—*maad* p.p. by the side of *makede*—*maked*. An exceptional case is the apparent loss of *f* in *hāde*, S.T. 16/554; [Prol. 554;] 18/617 [Prol. 617]: the ordinary M.E. form for O.E. *hæfde* is *hadde* (assimilation), and in the



cases referred to, the consonant has probably been shortened, and the vowel correspondingly lengthened, merely for the sake of the rime.

28. In an open syllable  $\bar{a}$  is generally represented by  $a$ , in a close one by  $aa$ .

29. Sources of  $\bar{e}$ :

(α) O.E.  $\acute{a}$ : *fēð*, *tēð* 'toe'; *lēde*, *shēde*, *brēð*; the pret. *bēð*, *glēð*, *rēð*, *bistēð*; *eðk*, *strēðk*; *hēð* (N.E. *whole*), *bēðr* 'boar', *sēðr*, *lēðre*, *eðre*, *hēðr*, *mēðr*, *mē*; *eðn*, *nēðn*, *stēðn*, *gēðn*, *shēðn* 'shone'; *pēðe*, *grēðen*, *agēðs*, *arēðs*; *gēðst* 'ghost'; *bēðt*, *gēðt*, *hēðt*, *ēðe* 'oats'; *hēðen*, *wēðt*, *bēðt* 'bit'; *smēðt*, *wrēðt*; *clēðth*, *eðth*, *lēðth*, *wrēðth*; likewise O.N.  $\acute{a}$ : *wēðn* 'abundance, quantity' (O.N. *ván*).

NOTE. S.T. 194/1991 [B. 1991]; 396/2105 [D. 2105]; *wēðn*, *wēðnes*, occur respectively in the sense of 'dwelling.' If this is based on O.N. *váne* the  $a$  must early have undergone lengthening. The form *wēðn* or *wēð* occurs also in other M.E. texts. *Cēðe* owes its  $\bar{e}$  to an early lengthening of  $a$  in M. Lat. *cappa*, *cāpa*, and may therefore be compared to *pēðe* from *papa*. Note incidentally the proper name *John*, the  $\bar{e}$  of which is perhaps due to contraction from *Johan* [or rather *Johēn* = Orm *Johān*].

(β) Rarely  $\bar{a}$  from O.E.  $\bar{a}$  = Germanic  $ai$ : *mōðst*, *mōðste*, by the side of *mēðste* [but already late Ags. North. *māst*, Holthausen, P.B.B. XII. 590].

(γ)  $\bar{a}$  from O.E.  $a$  ( $ea$ ) before  $-ld$ : *ēld*, *bēðld*, *cēðld*; *fēðden*, *hēðden*, *sēðld*, *tēðld*.

(δ) Mdu.  $\bar{o}$  or  $\bar{ø}$ : *crēne* (Mdu. *kronie*, from O.Fr. *caroigne*), *grēte* (N.E. *groat*).

(ε) Celtic  $\bar{o}$  as in *boost*, [but according to the N.E.D. *s.v.* the etymon is not known]. *Clēke* is probably due to M. Lat. *clocca*.



(ζ) O.E. *o* before final *-ld*: *gold*, cf. § 35, *e*; O.E. *a*, *o* before *-mb*: *comb*, *lomb*, etc.

(η) O.E. *o* in an open syllable: *poke*, *smoke*, *broken*; *cole*, *hole*, *tholen*; *ybore*, *yswore*, *forlore*, *bifore*; *throte*.

### 30. Sources of $\bar{o}$ :

(α) O.E. *ó*: *shō* 'shoe,' *dō* 'I do,' *untō*, *thertō*; *blōd*, *gōd*, *wōd* 'mad'; *bōok*, *cōok*, *hōok*, *wōok*, *forsōok* [*quōok*]; *tōol*; *dōom*, *cōom* 'came'; *nōon* (N.E. noon), *spon*, *mōone*, *sōone*; *qor(e)* (O.E. *ór* N.E. *ore*), *fōore* 'course, track'; *gōos*; *fōot*, *bōote*; *tōoth*, *sōoth*.

(β) O.N. *ó*: *bōone*, *cōok*, *rōote*, and O.N. *gu* (*au*) in *lōos*, O.N. *lōuss* 'loose, free,' Angl. A. VII. 152. In the case of *swōote*, *sōote*, also, Mlg. origin might be assumed, if O.E. *swót* did not occur in compounds (*swótsienc*), and if the correct form for the O.E. adverb *swóte* (adj. *swéte*) were not actually extant.

31. A fluctuation between  $\bar{o}$  and  $\bar{e}$  is shown in some words, the root-vowel of which resulting from O.E. *ā*, was, or is, preceded by *w*: *wō*, *twō*, *sō* (likewise, of course, *alsō*) from *swá*, probably also *whō* from *hwá* (O.E. *hwá*). The adv. *thō* has in Chaucer both  $\bar{e}$  (O.E. *þá*) and  $\bar{o}$  (Lg. *thð*). There is no definite proof of the occurrence of the latter phonetic form in the *Canterbury Tales*. It is less easy to explain why *go* sometimes occurs in rimes on  $\bar{e}$ , although not in the *Canterbury Tales*. *Hoom*, which ought phonetically to be *hōom*, is linked, when it occurs in rime, either with *dōom* or *cōom*, perhaps from lack of other rime-words. *Doon* 'to do,' on the



other hand, rimes not only on *-ĕn*, but also on *-ĕn*. The following may be considered inaccurate rimes: *sĕthe*: *bĕthe* or *wrĕthe*, only in early poems: *Blaunche*, 513, 519, 1189; *St. Cec.* S.T. 533/167 [G. 167]; *tĕ* (O.E. *tō*): *thĕ* (dem. pron. O.E. *þā*), S.T. 344/369 [D. 370]; in a corrupt strophe of the *Monkes Tale* *theretĕ* rimes with *mĕ*, *wĕ*, *gĕ*. S.T. 266/3510 [B. 3510].

**32. The representation of *ĕ* and *ē***, in so far as the doubling of the vowel-symbol is concerned, resembles that of the two *e*-sounds; only in an open syllable, before *r*, *ĕ* is not infrequently written *oo*, but before medial *ld* generally *o*, and when final hardly any graphic distinction is made between the open and the closed sound. A normalised orthography might with advantage always represent the closed sound by *oo* (finally, however, *o* would suffice), the open sound in a closed syllable by *øø*, in an open one by *ø*. The diacritic can certainly not be dispensed with in the case of *ø*, because the variable *u* in an open syllable is regularly written *o*.

### 33. Sources of *ū*:

(α) O.E. *ū*: *thow*, *how*, *now* *nowthe* (O.E. *nū þā*); *proud*, *loud* *loude*, *koude* (more rarely *kouthe*); *rough* *rowe*; *sowken*; *owle*, *foul* *foule* 'foul, ugly'; *toun*, *downe* 'down, hill'; *adoun* *doun*, *rownen*; *stoupen*; *bour*, *shour*, *sour* *sowre*, *oures*; *hous*, *mous*; *out* *oute*, *aboute*, *withoute*; *mouth*, *South*; *schowven*, *howve*, O.E. *hūfe*.

(β) Mlg. *ū*: *lowke*; *powpen*; *toute*, *snowte*, *strouten*. Likewise Keltic *w* or *ū*: *gowne*.

(γ) O.E. *u* before *nd*: *pound*, *ground*, *sound*,



*hound, stounde, wounde; ybounden, yfounden, ygrounaen.*

(δ) O.E. *u* before vocalised *w* from *ɟ*: *fowel fowl, youthe.*

(ε) Monophthongisation of M.E. *ou*, resulting from (1) O.E. *óɟ, óχ* when final: *bough, plough, slough, swough; tough; ynough ynow; lough.* (2) O.E. *éow* when final: *yow*, cf. § 46, Note: the initial *y* is probably due to analogy with the nom. *yē*, as the *ū* in *youre, youres* to analogy with *yow*. (3) O.E. *oɟ* when final: *trough*, cf. § 46, Note. (4) Mdu. *ou* from *ol*: *stout.*

34. *ū* is written either *ou*, a symbol borrowed from the French, or *ow*, which may be accounted for by the ordinary development of the M.E. diphthong *ou*, one of the sources of *ū*. As a rule, though not consistently, *ow* is used finally, frequently also in an open syllable, particularly before *l, n, v*. In our editions it would be advisable always to represent long *ū* by *ou*.

#### VARIABLE VOWELS.

35. The following vowels may be considered variable:

(α) O.E. *i* and *u*, as well as *i* from O.E. *y*, in an open syllable. In this case *u* is always represented by *o*. Examples: Pret. pl. *biden, gliden, riden, writen, dwinen, shinen, yshriven; witen; yiven, brice* (O.E. *brýce* 'breach'), *wike* (O.E. *wīcu*); *sone, dore, spore; love; some* (pl. of *som*); *come, shove* p.p. (cf. § 159). By the side of *wike*



occurs *wowke*, S.T. 45/1539 [A. 1539], O.E. *wūcu*, apparently a non-Chaucerian form.

NOTE 1. The following seem arguments in favour of designating these vowels as variable: (1) The general tendency to lengthen all short accented vowels. In consequence, *e*, *a*, *o*, in an open syllable, became long from about the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, after having previously caused the lengthening of the single final consonants in short monosyllables (§ 97). Considering this tendency it would seem an unaccountable anomaly, if *i* and *u*, in an open syllable, had remained short. (2) Occasional rimes of these vowels on *i* and *u*, § 325. But it must be granted that the extreme rarity of such rimes in Chaucer proves the tendency of these words to have been rather towards shortness than length. (3) The fact that in words like *some*, which Chaucer no longer uses as a dissyllable (not so the pl. *sones*), good MSS. do not omit the final *-e*. (4) The after-development of these sounds. For the most part they have become distinctly short in N.E.: *ridden*, *written*, *to wit*, *give*; *son*, *love*, *some*, *come*. But in isolated instances they appear lengthened: *i* without diphthongisation, hence spelt *ee*, in N.E. *weevil* and *week*; by the side of *to wit* the archaic form *to weet*, which is frequent in the time of Elizabeth and James I.; especially *u* before *r*, with which is connected a peculiar development of the quality: *door*, *spore*, by the side of *spur*. On the representation of M.E. variable *u* cf. § 37.

(β) *ɛ*, *a*, *ɔ* in an open syllable when the stem-ending of the following syllable is *n* or *r*. (1) *ɛ* from O.E. *ĕ* or *eo*: *weder*, *lether*, *heven*, *stevene*, *swevene*, *sevene*, *evene*, rarely from O.E. *æ*: *whether*. (2) *a* from O.E. *a*: *rather*, from O.E. *æ*: *fader*, *water*. (3) *ɔ* from O.E. *o*: *oven*, *over*. Final *-m* would doubtless exercise a similar influence, but no example is available: O.E. *botm* has in Chaucer, even in the nom., *botme* S.T. 290/4291 [B. 4291].



(4) Final *l* in a following syllable need hardly be considered: *crādel*, *lādel*, but perhaps *sadel* with variable *a*. Mute + *r* following a vowel seems, in some cases, to produce variable quantity: *gadre* (O.E. *gadrian*), *togedre*, or rather *togidre* (O.E. *tóþædre*). It seems doubtful whether the participial -*n* in forms like *soden*, *troden*, the root of which ends in -*d*, prevents complete lengthening of *o* in Chaucer, as stem-formative *n* otherwise does.

NOTE 2. In these cases also the variable vowel generally becomes short in N.E. Well known exceptions are *even*, *over*; especially striking is the lengthening of variable *a* in *father*, *rather*, *water*.

(γ) *ɛ*, *a*, *ø*, in an open syllable when the following syllable contains *y*: *ɛ* from O.E. *e*, *peny*: from O.E. *y*, *besy*; *a* from O.E. *α(o)*, *many*; *ø* from O.E. *o*, *body*. Exceptionally perhaps original length in *eny* (O.E. *ænij*).

(δ) All originally short vowels before consonant-groups that produce length, when the following syllable ends in *r* or *n*: e.g. *i* in *linden*, probably also in *hindermost*; *ɛ* from O.E. *ē* in *selden*, on the other hand, *seelde*, where *n* has been dropped, with a distinct *ē*; *a* in *alder*, *alderman* (whereas *āld* becomes *ōld* in Chaucer); *u* in *thonder*, *wonder*, *sonder*, *asonder*. On length by analogy, cf. § 18, Note.

NOTE 3. *Yonder* is linked in rime with the above-mentioned words. It, as well as *yond*, had an *u*-sound in M.E. The development of O.E. *jeond* is not quite clear; if *o* in it = *u* (*je*, of course denotes the palatal *j*), the question arises, why not *yound* in M.E.? But perhaps the toneless character of the word should be taken into consideration [or, on the other hand, the possibility of O.E. *δ* = M.E. *ø*].



(e) Old  $\xi$  before *ld*, whereas old  $e$  ( $\ddot{e}$ ), as in *feeld*, § 23 $\beta$ , becomes long. But since in Chaucer's language the *i*-mutation of O.E. *a*, *ea*, before *l*-combinations appears both as Anglian  $\xi$  and Kentish  $e$ , we may find in his writings *elde* with variable  $\xi$ , by the side of *weelde*, *unweelde* with  $\ddot{e}$ . In exceptional cases *-eld* with variable vowel results from non-mutated *-eald*: *hēlde* (instead of the usual *hōlde*): *smēlde* (from *smellen*, hence properly *smellde*), *Fame*, 1686 [Globe, *Fame*, Bk. III. 595]; *behēlde*:  $\xi$ *lde* (*Anelida*, 80).  $\phi$  appears to be variable also when resulting from *o* before medial *ld*: *sholde*, *wolde*, *noide* (*wolde* rimes with  $\phi$ *lde*,  $\tau$ *lde*, etc.); on the other hand, Orrm spells *wollde*, *shollde* (as contrasted with *gold*=*gōld*).

(ζ) Old  $\epsilon$  before medial *-nd* probably becomes variable  $\xi$ : *wende* (O.E. *wēnde*); but cf. *feēnd*, *freēnd*, § 16 $\beta$ .

(η)  $\phi$  before *rd*: (1) from an original vowel-length: *lord* (from *lōverd*, O.E. *hláford*); (2) from O.E. *o*: *bord*, *hord* *hoord*, *tord* *toord*, *word*.  $\xi$  before *rd* is variable or long in *berd* (O.E. *beard*), *yerd* (O.E. *jeard*), *aferd* by the side of *afēred* (O.E. *áfēred*): variable or short in *herde*—*herd* (O.E. *hērde*—*héred*), *ferde* (O.E. *fērde*), in *swerd* (O.E. *sweord*), *yerde* (O.E. *jeard*).

(θ)  $\ddot{u}$  before *mb*: *clomben* pret. pl. and p.p.; probably also before *ng*: *tonge*, *yonge*, *songen*, *sprongen*, *stongen*, and before *rn* in *borne* (e.g. in *Sidyngborne*), *mornen*.

NOTE 4. If the following syllable ends in *r* (or stem-formative *n*) a short vowel results: *hunger*.

(ι) O.E.  $\acute{u}$ , though in an open syllable, sometimes



becomes variable *u* before *v*: *dove*. Original short *a* in an open syllable is variable in *have*.

(κ) In a few cases of originally short vowels before a final simple consonant. Without exception *a* (from O.E. *æ*) before voiceless *s*:—*glas*, *gras*, *was* (the voiceless character of *s* in *was* is in M.E. proved beyond a doubt by rimes). Also *ɛ* from *e* in *wel*; by the side of this form the distinctly lengthened one with *ē*: *wēl*. But even a variable *ɛ*, when riming with *ē*, may be represented by *ee*. Besides *fer* (O.E. *feor*) with short or variable *ɛ* there seems to be a *feer* with *ē*, cf. *Fame*, 610 [*Globe*, *Fame*, II. 102], (: *Jupiter*, but 591 [*Globe*, *Fame*, II. 83], *Jupiter*: *botillēr*). *o* in *upon* rimes, S.T. 547/562 [G. 562]: *gōn*, S.T. 553/755 [G. 755]: *proporcion*, cf. § 58.

36. The greater number of the vowels we have designated as variable would by many philologists be counted short, but cases like *wike*; *evene*, *over*; *bord*, *hord*; *dore*, *mornen*, on the other hand, they would consider distinctly long. The view taken above seems to me, however, more consonant with the logic of linguistic development, as well as with the rimes of accurate M.E. poets, especially Chaucer. A thorough study of Orm's orthography, though the results of such an investigation would not be immediately applicable to the language of Chaucer—for differences of chronology and dialect must be allowed for in this respect also—would certainly tend to support my opinion.

37. The variable vowels are represented in the Chaucer MSS. by simple symbols; by a double



symbol only in isolated cases, as *weel*, *hoord*, *toord*—especially in rimes on long vowels. Variable *u* is regularly represented in the greater number of the best codices by *o*, only *under* with *u* (or rather *v*). Those who consider the vowel short ascribe this fact in part to the vicinity of *m*, *n*, *v* (an explanation similar to ours of *wo*-for *wu*-or *uuu*-; *-onn* for *-unn*), in part to an endeavour to discriminate in an open syllable between English (and Romance) *u* and Romance *ü*: whereby, of course, an equally obvious confusion between English *o* and *u* was artificially produced. It must be granted that no undue weight ought to be attached to the spelling, but it is surely not wholly insignificant that one and the same scribe should persistently write *thonder*, but *hunten*; *yonge*, but *hunger*. The practice of the best MSS. should be taken as the model for a normalised system, but for the purpose of differentiating *u* and *o*, it would be advisable to denote the open *o* by the symbol *ø*, even in a closed syllable in doubtful cases—and it would be most simple to do so in every case without exception. For variable *i* the MSS. sometimes have *e* (*weke* instead of *wike*), especially after *y*: *yeven* for *given*, but the rimes prove this to be non-Chaucerian.

38. Before concluding the discussion of the simple Germanic vowels, a sound must be mentioned which occurs only in exceptional cases, either as a variable or a short vowel, *i.e.* the South-Western *ü* (more accurately defined perhaps as a sound intermediate between *ü* and *ö*), representative of O.E. *y*. This sound occurs regularly under secondary stress in *Caunterbury*, otherwise only in sporadic rimes: *murȳ* (instead of



*mery*), S.T. 23/802 [Prol. 802]; *Caunterbury*: *murie*, S.T. 40/1386, [A. 1386] 456/1733 [E. 1733]: *Mercurie*. But *thurst*, which does not occur in rime, should be derived, according to Zupitza, Litt. Ztg. 1885, col. 609, not from O.E. *þyrst*, but from O.E. *þurst*.

### DIPHTHONGS.

**39. The O.E. diphthongs** have become monophthongs in Chaucer's language. The MSS. not infrequently have *ie* = O.E. *eo*, *io*, especially before *f*: *thief*, *lief*, adj., but the poet himself presumably wrote *ee*, as his rimes are, in this case, invariably on the *ē*-sound. These cases of *ie* are probably Kenticisms of the copyists; *io* (also *ia*) in the O.E. period, and *ie* in the M.E., were for a long time usual in Kent. Whether *ie* occurs as a fracture is doubtful: perhaps in *wierde* (O.E. *wyrd*), Troil. III. 617; according to Addit. MS. *werdes* occurs Boece 10, but according to the Camb. MS. *wierdes*: also in *hierdes* 'shepherdess' (: *wierdes* 'fates'), Troil. III. 619, but probably only for the sake of the rime. Otherwise Chaucer probably wrote *herde*, *herdes*.

But, on the other hand, the M.E. diphthongs, some of which occur already in Old Kentish, are in active use in Chaucer. They are, as a rule, produced by the union of an original vowel with an *i* or *u* developed from a following consonant. In Chaucer these diphthongs are: *ai*, *oi*, *ēu*, *ēu*, *au*, *ou*, *ou*.

**40. The diphthong *ai*** derives in part from an older *ai* that traces back to the first period of M.E.,



in part from older *ei*. As a rule, the better Chaucer MSS. still distinguish graphically between the two groups: older *ai* is generally written *ai*, *ay*, whereas *ai* from *ei* is by preference written *ei*, *ey*; but each of the two groups, and especially the second, contains instances of assimilation to the other. The fluctuation between *i* and *y* as symbol for the second element in the diphthong is, on the whole, regulated in such a manner that *y* occurs at the end of a word or syllable, *i* medially, but even in the latter case *y* often stands (p.p. *sayd*, *seyd*), and is, indeed, the rule before *n* (*slayn*); from the nature of things it is of course far more frequent than *i*. In a normalised orthography it would be advisable always to denote the second element of the diphthong by *y*, but with regard to the first element to discriminate carefully between the two groups. But when words from both groups rime with each other, either the orthography of the first word should determine that of the second, or, for phonetic reasons, the spelling should be *ay*; for instance, the pret. sg. of 'to see' should always be spelt '*say*,' unless some other phonetic value (as in *sy*) is at issue.

#### 41. I. Older *ai* results from:

(a) O.E. *æj*: *day*, gen. *dayes* (whilst the pl. *dayes* is due to analogy, cf. § 44), *lay*, 'I lay,' *may*; *mayden mayde*; *sayde seyde* 'I said,' *sayd seyde* pp. 'said'; *fayn* 'fain, glad,' *yslayn*.

(β) various sources: *May* (the O.E. loan-word *Maius*, but more probably the O.Fr. *Mai*); especially O.N. *ei* in cases where, in contradistinction, O.E. has *á*: *ay* 'ever,' *nay*, *swayn*, *waik*.



## II. *ai* from older *ei* results from :

(a) O.E. *ej* (*e* by *i*-mutation from *a*): *seyest*, *seith*, *leyest* 'thou layest,'—*leith*, *leyde* (*seyen*, *seyn*, *sayn* 'to say' and *leyen* 'to lay,' etc., are due to analogy).

(β) O.E. *ēj*: *wey weye way*, *pley*, *pleyen*, *ley(e)n* 'lain,' *seyn* 'seen,' *ayeyn*.

(γ) O.E. *ȝȝ*: *beyest*, *abeyest* (*beyen*, *abeyen* is due to analogy).

(δ) O.E. *ea* before *h*: *eight*, *seigh*, or as Chaucer seems to have written, *say* 'saw.'

(ε) O.E. *ēȝ*: *ey* 'egg,' *keye*, *cley*, *grey*.

(ζ) O.E. *ēȝ*: *wreyen* 'accuse.'

(η) O.E. *ēȝ*, *ȝȝ* (*i*-mutation from *auȝ*): *dreye* 'dry' (by the side of *drȝe*), *teyen* 'tie, bind.'

(θ) Different sources: *sleighte* (O.N. *slággð*), *deyen* (O.N. *döyja*, O.Fris. *dēja*), *reysen* (O.N. *reisa*), *reysen* (Mlg. *reisen*), *weyven*, O.N. *veifa*).

NOTE. By the side of some of the above-mentioned forms doublets occur in which the diphthong has yielded to a monophthong, whereas, in other cases, only the monophthongised forms occur in Chaucer (cf. § 21 ε, also § 10 δ). A thorough investigation of the conditions which necessitate this monophthongisation belongs to the province of M.E. grammar. Meanwhile the following observations may suffice: O.E. *ēȝ* and *ej* never produce *i* in Chaucer, hence *abyest* (O.E. *ābyest*, *dbejest*) traces back to *abȝest*, not *abeyest*; on the other hand, O.E. *eoȝ* always results in *i* and never in a diphthong. Therefore, in the former case, the *ei*-sound was in existence before the period of the monophthongisation of *ei* began. In the latter case either *eoȝ*, *ioȝ* became *ieȝ*, *iȝ*, *i*, or *ēȝ* became *ei*. Now if *ēȝ* produces in Chaucer only *ȝe*, *hēah* only *high*, we must infer therefrom that in an older period the forms *hēah* exclusively prevailed in his dialect. It is more peculiar that *say* should occur by the side of *seigh*. O.E. *seigh* had resulted partly in *sah* (cf. hereon § 44), partly in



*seh*; but apparently the influence of the palatal extended yet further, and *seh* appeared as a dialectal variety of *seh*. Whence *seigh* and *seigh*, and from the latter form *sy*. Most peculiar of all is, however, that O.E. *ēȝ* from *ōȝi*, and *ēȝ* from *auȝi* (*dreye* 'dry' for *drȝe* goes back to *drȝe*) produce no monophthong in Chaucer. If *dȝen* occurs by the side of *deȝen* the latter might trace back to O.Fris. *dēja* (or O.Dan. *dōia* with long *ō*, which, according to E. Brate, Nord. Lehnwörter im Ormmulum, P.B.B. x. 38, is the source of *dejenn*), the former to O.N. *dōyja*. *Slighte* and *sleighte* seem to postulate one and the same original form. The adjective from which both words are derived occurs only in rime in the form *sly*, *slye*, but there is no reason for doubting *sleigh* as a Chaucerian form. Anyone who should devote himself to exhaustive investigations aiming at a solution of existing difficulties would need to discriminate most accurately among the various dialectal peculiarities and the different periods of the language. The chronology of the diphthongs has the most important bearing on their development. Four periods may be distinguished: (1) Final *ȝ* becomes *i*; (2) medial *ȝ* becomes *i*; (3) *i* develops before final *h*; (4) *i* develops before protected *h*.

42. *ȝi* occurs rarely excepting in Romance words: *embroyded*, p.p., cf. § 140, *floyten* (Mdu.?), *boy*, of unknown origin, *boistous* (Wall. *bwystus*).

43. *ȝu*, generally spelt *ew*, more rarely *eu*, since *w* and *u* interchange similarly to *y* and *i*, is due to O.E. *éow*: *trēwe* 'faithful, true,' *knēw* 'knew,' *thrēw*; also in *nēwe* (O.E. *néowe*), *hēwe* (O.E. *héow*).

NOTE. Instead of O.E. *treow* *tréo*, *cneow* *cno*, the latter forms have become the prevailing ones in M.E. throughout the whole inflexion of the words in question.

43b. *ȝu* is carefully distinguished from *ēu*; it stands for O.E. *éaw* in *fēwe* (O.E. *féawe*), *thēw* (O.E. *þéaw*), *shēwe* (O.E. *scéawian*), also in *rēwe* 'row,'



*dronkelēwe*, cf. Weymouth, Pronunciation, p. 104. On final *ēaw*, cf. also § 44, Note.

44. *au*, when final in a word or syllable generally spelt *aw*, also *au*, is due to :

(α) O.E. *aȝ*: *hawe*, *larwe*, *marwe*, *shawe*, *darwes* (O.E. *dajas*, whereas *dæȝ* *dæȝes* produces *day dayes*), *dawen* 'to dawn,' *drawen*, *yslawen* (O.E. *jeslajen*, just as *yslayn* = *jeslæȝen*): likewise O.N. *ag*: *awe* (O.N. *age*) and Mlg. *ag*: *fawe* (*fagan*, whereas the far more frequent *fayn* = *fæȝen*).

(β) O.E. *ea*, *æ* before *h*: *saugh*, *saw* (for another development, cf. § 41, II. *ð* and Note), *faught*, *straughte*; likewise O.N. *a* in *draught* (from O.N. *dráttir*).

(γ) O.E. *d* or *ð* before protected *h*, for O.E. *ð*, when shortened, generally also results in *a*: *aught* (O.E. *dht*), *naught*, *taughte* (O.E. *táhte*, *tæhte*), *raughte* (O.E. *ræhte* from *ræcean* and *reahte* from *reccan* have almost ceased to be distinguishable).

(δ) *ēaw*, when final: *straw*, unless it be more correct to assume *ēaw*.

NOTE. O.E. final *ēaw* either drops the *w* at an early period, or it becomes vocalised at the beginning of the M.E. period; hence O.E. *streaw* results, on the one hand, in *strēa*, *strē* (in Chaucer, of course, *ē* when final: *stree*, but *strees*), on the other hand, in *strau*, *strau*. Similarly *hræw*, *hræu* *rau*. Obscure is the origin of *wraw* 'peevish, fretful,' but it is clearly not derived from *wráh*, which in Chaucer must have become *wrough* but presupposes a form \**wræw* or *wreaw*, or a borrowed form *wrau*.

45. *ou* results almost invariably from an originally short *o*, or from shortened *ó* before protected *h*: *wroughte* (O.E. *workte*), *broughte*, *thoughte*, *roughte*



(O.E. *rôhte*), *soughte*; *ought* (O.E. *ôht*), *nought*; only exceptionally from old *ð* before protected *h*: *oughte* (O.E. *âhte*).

On *though* from O.N. *þó* (pre-literary \**þðh*), cf. § 46, Note.

NOTE. As *aught*, *naught* go back to O.E. *âht*, *nâht*, but the forms *oughht*, *noughht*, though with the same meaning, to O.E. *ôht*, *nôht*, so O.E. *âhte* should regularly have produced *aughte*, which is common in other dialects, but does not occur in Chaucer. For the explanation of the form *oughht*, note that in *âhte* the root-vowel acquired the same timbre as in the forms of the present *ðjan*, *ðh*, *ðjon*, *ðje*, *ðjen*. The influence of analogy caused *âhte* to retain its long *â* beyond the usual time, so that *â* became *ē*. The shortening of the *ē* in *ēhte* probably did not take place until *ēwen*, *ēwe* had become *owen*, *owe*. Thus, by the side of *owe* (spelt *owe*), appeared first *oghht*, and later *oughht*.

46. *ou* generally spelt *ou* medially, otherwise *ow*, goes back to :

(α) O.E. medial *ôw* or *ôj*: *glowen*, *growen*, *wowen* (O.E. *wôgian*).

(β) O.E. medial *oj* (medial *ow* would produce the same result if it occurred), and *o* before final *h*: *bowe* (O.E. *boja*), *though* (Orig. N. *thoh*).

(γ) O.E. *ðw*: *crowe*, 'crow S.', *blowen*, *crowen* 'to crow,' *knownen*, *sowen*, *throwen*, *soule* (O.E. *sâwel*), *slôw* (O.E. *slâw*), *snow* (O.E. *snâw*); O.E. *ðj*: *throwe* (O.E. *þrâj*), *owen* (O.E. *ajan*), likewise O.N. *ðg*: *lowe* (*lággr*).

(δ) O.E. medial *éow*: *trouthe*, *routhe*, *foure*, *trowen*; but for these forms it may be more correct to assume *ëow*.

(ε) Exceptionally O.E. *ðw* in *slouthe* (O.E. *slâwd*), by assimilation to *slow*.



NOTE. The following further observations may be made on the history of the diphthongs formed with *u*. (1) M.E. has an aversion to vowels of undue length, so that soon after the formation of a new diphthong the first element, if originally a long vowel, becomes shortened: *blōuen* from *blōwan* becomes *blouen*, etc. (2) The chronology of the development of *u* from *w*, *j*, and *h* is as follows:—(α) *u* from final *w* after *ēa*; (β) from any other *w* and final *j*; (γ) from medial *j* and final *h*; (δ) from protected *h*. (3) From *qu* (whether it=*q* from *o+u*, or=*q* from *ā+u*) there regularly develops *ou*, so that *bowe* from *boja*, *knowe* from *cnōwan*, contain in Chaucer the same diphthong as *growen* from *grōwan*. Only the *qu* that developed last maintained itself, hence this diphthong occurs only before protected *h*, where *ou* never stands. (4) *ou* became *ū* only finally, and only at one definite period, and this sound is as little affected by the evanescent breathing which is all that survives of an originally final *h*, as by a weak *-e* which is a later addition: *ynow* (*jenōj*), *ynowe* and *ynough* (*jenōh*), all with *ū*; for which reason every medial *ou*, as well as any which developed finally at a later period, remained diphthongs. In Chaucer we find *ū* from final *-ōj* *-ōh* *-ōj* and *-ēow*, provided the latter has not resulted in *-eu* (cf. § 33 *e*, and § 43 *ō*); but not from *-ōh* and not from *-āw* *-āj* *-āh*. In contrast to the relation between *ei* and *i*, that between *ou* and *ū* is perfectly clear, nor in this case either are doublets found in Chaucer. In the M.E. of Chaucer's time doublets can, in any case, only have resulted in the very youngest forms of *ou*, namely, in cases from originally final *ōj*. The only available example is *troj*, which in Chaucer is spelt *trough*, with the sound of *ū*, but elsewhere has probably preserved the diphthong: for the N.E. phonetic form *trɔf* (spelt *trough*) postulates M.E. *ou*, or rather *ow*, *qu*, *qf*, as N.E. *inɔf* (spelt *enough*), *rɔf* (rough), M.E. *ū* or rather *uu*, *uw*, *uv*, *uf*. Chaucer's pronunciation of *trough* could in N.E. have produced only one or the other of the two forms *træu* or *trɔf*. The conjunction *though*, on the other hand, must, as in Chaucer, have everywhere retained the diphthong *ou*. I have yet to adduce a proof against Zupitza, A.f. d. A. II. 6, that my



derivation of *though* from a loan-word *thoh* is correct:—*though* is not derived from O.E. *þeah* because (1) in Chaucer's language, or the dialects upon which it is based, O.E. *ea* before *h* never resulted in *a*, far less *o*, cf. § 49; (2) in other dialects it results, indeed, in *a*, but in one of a lighter timbre, which is incapable of transition into *o*; however, M.E. *þah* had probably a short *a* (cf. *þehh* in Orm. and also Brate, Nord. Lehnwörter im Ormulum, P.B.B. x. 12); (3) Orm uses the form *þohh*, a derivation of which from O.E. *þeah* would force us to assume two processes without parallel in the language of this author: development of *ea* to *a* instead of to *æ*, and development of *d* to *g*, instead of retention of *d*; moreover, the shortening of the vowel—though in itself not impossible—would, under these circumstances, be difficult of explanation. Brate (P.B.B. x. 60 f.) derives *þohh* from a pre-literary O.N. \**þóh*. On the effect of analogy in verb inflexion, so far as it bears on the relations of *ou* and *u*, cf. § 152.

47. In normalised texts it would be advisable to differentiate *ou*, *ou* and *ū*, by writing *ou* for *ū* (hence: *ynough*, *lough*, *bough*, *bouen* 'to bow, bend,' *nou*, *hou*, *you*), *ow* for the diphthong *ou* (*growen*, *knownen*, *bowe* 'bow' S., *though*, *rowthe*, *trowthe*); but either *ou* or simple *o* for *ou*, in which case the following *gh* would sufficiently indicate the *u*-element, and as a matter of fact this is frequently done in the MSS.

## SUMMARY.

48. At this stage it may be advisable to pause for a moment in order to sum up in connected sequence the history of the O.E. vowels, so far as they are represented in Chaucer's dialect.

I. O.E. *a* remains *a*, which is lengthened in an open syllable.



II. O.E. *a*, *o* before resonants becomes *ø* before *-nd*, *-ng*; *ē* before *-mb*: *cōmb*, *lōmb*, *wōmb*, *clōmb*; otherwise *a*.

III. O.E. *æ* almost invariably becomes *a*, the quantity of which is further determined by the laws discussed above. *ǣ* appears only in *messe*, unless Romance influence ought here to be assumed, *nesse* (in *Holdernes*), after palatal *k*; *chestre* (in Chaucer only in composition: *Rouchestre*, S.T. 254/3116 [B. 3116]); further in cases where O.E. *æ* stands instead of, or by the side of, *e* = *i*-mutation of *a*, as in *berne* (O.E. *bern*, *bærn*), likewise in *whether*, whereas from *tojedre* (O.E. *tōjædre*) has developed the form *tojidre*, which the best MSS. of the Canterbury Tales have preserved, and which is confirmed by rime in Leg. 649.

#### IV. O.E. *ea*:

(α) In an open syllable regularly becomes *a* in Chaucer.

(β) Before *l*-combinations O.W.S. O.Kt. *ea* appeared by the side of Angl. *a*. In the district where Chaucer's dialect developed, *-AL* and *-EAL* seem to have met. Both resulted in *AL*- with lengthened *a* in the combination *-ALD*, which—like original *ǣ*—becomes *ē*, and regularly appears in this form in Chaucer. In exceptional cases only he employs forms in which *ELD*, with a variable *e*, has developed from *EALD*: *helde*, *bihelde* (cf. § 35 ε); these are probably not native to the poet's dialect, but have been borrowed for the sake of rime from some neighbouring dialect.

(γ) Before *r*-combinations *ea* was the rule in the



later period of O.E. in all dialects which enter into the discussion here. This, in Chaucer, usually results in *a*. Exceptions are: *erme* = O.E. *earmian*, S.T. 312/312 [C. 312] (Stratmann—ignoring the context—translates the word 'make miserable' = O.E. *ierman*, *yrman*), probably also *Blaunche*, 80 (instead of the transmitted *yerne*), *fern*, *yerd* 'garden,' *berd*, in which lengthening of the *ɛ* takes place (§ 35 η).

(δ) Before *h* and *h*-combinations (naturally also before *x* = *hs*) O.Angl. *æ* appeared by the side of O.W.S. and O.Kt. *ea*. Chaucer's linguistic usage presupposes in part *ɛ* (exceptionally *e*), in part a darker sound which was bound to become *a*: *flex*, *wex*, *wexen* and *waxen*, *eight* (from *ɛht*), *seigh say* (*sɛh*); *sy* (*sɛh*); *saugh*, *saw* (*sah*), *faught*, *laughter*, etc.

V. O.E. *e* as *i*-mutation of *a* regularly becomes *ɛ*, or in an open syllable lengthened *ē*. Exceptionally *a* has developed before protected *r* in *warien* 'curse' (O.E. *werjian*, *werjan*, *wærjan*), *harwede* (O.E. *herjode*). *Tarien*, 'to tarry, delay,' is probably a blending of O.E. *terjan* with O.Fr. *tarier* (which is, however, itself of Germanic and identical origin), and perhaps, so far as the meaning is concerned, with O.Fr. *targer*. The *i*-mutation of O.W.S. O.Kt. *ea*, O.Angl. *a* before *l*-, was W.S. *ie*, *y*, Kent. *e*, Angl. *æ*, *e*. Closed and open *e* coalesced in *ɛ* when the sound remained short; but before *-ld* closed *e* was lengthened: *eelde*, *unweelde*, by the side of which variable *ɛ* in *ɛlde*. The *i*-mutation of O.E. *eah*, *æh* occurs in Chaucer only in cases where in O.E. it had already reached the *i*-stage: *might* 'might,' S. *mighte* 'might,' V. *night*.



VI. O.E. *ē* before *-ld* becomes *ɛ* (*fɛɛld*, *sheɛld*); in other cases it becomes *ɛ*, and thereupon, in open syllables, *ē̄*.

VII. O.E. *eo*, *iō*, as a rule becomes *ɛ* (it occurs more rarely in open syllables, hence less frequently *ē̄*). But before protected *h* we find *i*, not only where this stage had been reached already in O.W.S. and O.Kt., as in *knight*, *riht*, *six*, but also in *fighten*, and even in *highte*, although here the only O.E. form transmitted is *heht* (by the side of *hēt*), not *heoht*. In *silk*, *milk*, *silver* the *i* sometimes occurs already in O.E., but it may be partially due to foreign influence (e.g. O.N. *silkī*).

VIII. O.E. *i* is lengthened before *ld*, *nd*, *mb* (*child*, *wýnd*, *clýmben*); in an open syllable it is variable. but in the majority of cases it seems to become *ī*; cf. § 8.

IX. O.E. *o* always becomes *ɔ* or *ō̄*, even where it is lengthened before *-ld* (*gold*), and naturally where it becomes variable in quantity.

X. O.E. *u* is lengthened before *nd* (*bounden*, *founden*), becomes variable before *mb*, *ng*, *rn*, etc., as well as in an open syllable; in other cases it remains short (*ū* with a tendency to *ø*?).

XI. O.E. *y*. Already in O.Kt. *e* appeared by the side of *y*, and in course of time it becomes more frequent. In M.E. *u* (i.e. *ü* with a tendency to *ø*) appears in South-Western territory, *e* in South-Eastern, in other districts generally *i*. In Chaucer *u* occurs only in *burden*, *-bury* (*Caunterbury*), and otherwise exceptionally for the sake of rime (*murȳ*, *murie*). The correct form in Chaucer's dialect is *e*, which has



become *e*, and *i* which, where it remains short and is not followed by *gh*, probably = *i*. *e* is on the whole more frequent than *i*. [On the other hand, according to Morsbach, M.E. Gr. § 131, Note 1, *i* is more frequent than *e*.] *i* occurs regularly before *gh* (*flight, afright*); as a rule also before *n* and *n*-combinations: *kyn, synne, wynne, thynne* (more frequent than *thenne*), *kyng, kȳnde, mȳnde*, with the exception of *-nt*: *dent, stenten*, rarely *stynten*; before *rth*: *birthe, myrthe*; further, *filte* S., *fulfillen* by the side of *fulfellen* V., *gilt* 'guilt,' *kissen*, more frequently than *kessen*, which he uses for the sake of rime. On the other hand, generally *lest* 'lust, desire,' *lesten* V. 'to lust' (only one certain instance of *liste* in a rhyme on *upriste*). Hence it would be better to read 172/1332 [B. 1332] *keste* : *leste*, and certainly 343/317 [D. 317] *chest* : *lest* with H. and P. The subst. *lest* occurs twice in all MSS. linked in rime with *best* (C. once *best* for *lest*); and, in addition, once *best* : *fest* 122/4276 [A. 4276] where H.E.Hg. C. have the *e*-form, Co.P.L. the *i*-form. Hence we must read 4/132 [Prol. 132] *best* : *lest* as in H., with which Co.P.L., and in part also C., agree, and deny the occurrence of the form *brist* 'breast,' in Chaucer. The subst. *list* remains only 351/633 [D. 633] (: *lyst* from *list*).

**49. The O.E. long vowels and diphthongs** are represented as follows in Chaucer. O.E. *ā* by *ē*; O.E. *æ* by *ē*; O.E. *ē* by *ē*; O.E. *ī* by *ī*; O.E. *ō* by *ō*; O.E. *ū* by *ū*; O.E. *y* by *ī* (*ē* only exceptionally in forms which may be considered Kenticisms, as *feer* besides *fyr*); O.E. *ēa* by *ē*; *eo*, *to* as a rule by *ē*, but before *ȝ* and *h* by *ī* (before protected *h*



by *i*: *light* 'light' S.), also in *sik*, and shortened in *fil*, *siknesse*.

As in O.E. *æ* and *é* stand side by side, so in Chaucer *ē* and *ĕ* alternate under conditions which have been sufficiently defined, § 25. Again, as in Anglian O.E. *éa* appears before palatals as *é*, so in Chaucer we have *ēke* by the side of *ĕk*, whilst *hȳ* presupposes O.E. *héh* for *héah*, and *ȳe* likewise *ēje* for *éaje*.

The cases in which O.E. *æ* and *éa* have resulted, in Chaucer's language, in *ȅ* instead of *ē*, and where O.E. *ēo* seems to have become *ō*, require special comment. Several M.E. dialects develop an *ā* from *æ* and *éa*. This, however, never becomes *ȅ*: *bāre* by the side of *bēre*, *chas* by the side of *chēs* (N.E. *chose* has no connection with this form, but is due to the M.E. pl. *chōsen*). This *ā* is therefore a lighter sound than the O.E. *á*, and occurs in Sth. texts not infrequently by the side of, though carefully differentiated from, the *ȅ* which had developed from the latter. The lighter *ā* does not occur in Chaucer in this function, nor has it left any real traces in N.E. (N.E. *race*, if borrowed from the Northern dialects, is derived either from O.N. *rás*, or from Mdu. *ræs*). *ā*, *ȅ*, can develop only in certain cases from *æ*, *éa*: (1) *æ* from Germanic *ai* without *i*-mutation. Sievers is inclined to deny the existence of *æ* for *á* in O.E. altogether; in all doubtful cases he assumes *i*-mutation to account for the *æ*, and leaves *mæst* and *flæsc* unexplained [for which forms *i*-mutation is, however, proved to be possible, Angl. V. Anz. 85]. But he disregards the fact that in O.W.S. even a word like *jást* appears in the form *jæst*, for



which, in the 10th century, *ǵast* again becomes the rule. But, at any rate, the word *mæst* is a certain example of a case where, instead of *ǣ* and *ē*, *ǣ* and *ǣ̆* seem to have been the rule in O.E. The former *ǣ* survives, the latter *ǣ̆* becomes *ā*, and thereupon *ȝ*. Thus, in Chaucer, we find *mę̆st* by the side of *mę̆st*. Corresponding to Ohg. *meina* we must assume for O.E. a form (not in evidence) *mæn*, with or without a secondary form *mán*, M.E. *mēne* and *māne mōne*. Chaucer has only the form *mōne*. But if the O.E. verb *mēnan* becomes in M.E. on the one hand regularly *mēnen mēnen*, but on the other hand *mānen, mōnen*, the two latter forms must be due to analogy with the corresponding substantive, an assumption which is confirmed by the fact that the vowel *ā*, or *ȝ*, appears in older M.E. more rarely in the verb than in the noun, though in course of time the differentiation into *mean* and *moan*, which is established in N.E., becomes apparent in both. Chaucer uses the verb only in *ē-* or *ȝ-* forms. (2) O.E. *ǣ* and *éa* before *w* may result either in *ē* or in *ā, ȝ*, in either case a diphthong develops which, finally, becomes *eu* or *ou*: O.E. *slēwǣ*, M.E. *sleuthe slouthe*—the latter form is common in Chaucer, O.E. *scēawian*, M.E. *shewen showen*, Chaucer *shewen*; O.E. *strēawian*, M.E. *strewen strowen*. Chaucer seems to employ the form *strawen*, which may be accounted for by the development of a dialectal form *strawen*, instead of the regular *strowen* from *strawen*, in consequence of assimilation to the subst. *straw*.

NOTE 1. Except in the above-mentioned cases M.E. *ȝ* does not occur as representative of O.E. *éa*, and only apparently



as representative of O.E. *ð*. In all cases where in several dialects M.E. *ð* apparently corresponds to an O.E. *ð*, it would certainly be advisable to investigate whether a secondary form with *d* is not phonetically possible, or whether no loan-word, especially no O.N. one (cf. for instance, *læn* from O.N. *lân*, *wǣren* from O.N. *várum*, etc.) is the source, or, finally, whether analogy has not been in play (cf. pret. pl. *ȝoven goven*, instead of *ȝeven geven* by analogy with the p.p. *ȝoven* from *ȝeoven* by the side of *ȝeven* or *ȝiven*).

O.E. *eo* is in some M.E. texts represented at least occasionally by *ō* instead of *ē*; but in a fairly large area (and in the district where Chaucer's language prevails) an *o* develops, but only before *w*, the original quantity, and hence also quality, of which seem doubtful; medially it is bound in course of time to result in the diphthong *ou*, finally in *ū*:—O.E. *fēowere*, M.E. *foure*; O.E. *hrēowan*, M.E. *rewen* and *rowen* (Chaucer: *rēwen*); O.E. *hrēowd̄*, M.E. *reuthe* and *routhe* (Chaucer: *routhe*); O.E. *sēowian*, M.E. *sewen* and *sowen* (Chaucer: *sowen*); O.E. *trēowe*, M.E. *trēwe* and *trowe* (Chaucer: *trēwe*); O.E. *trēowian*, M.E. *trēwen* and *trōwen* (Chaucer: *trōwen*); O.E. *trēowd̄*, M.E. *treuthe* and *trouthe* (Chaucer: *trouthe*); O.E. *éow*, M.E. *eu* and *ou*, *ȝeu* and *ȝou*, Chaucer *yow* (i.e. *yū*), in *youres* *ū* for *ou* by analogy. In the remaining examples of O.E. *eow* Chaucer appears to be familiar only with the diphthong *eu*.

NOTE 2. The development of *ow ou* from *éow* is scarcely to be explained by the change of the falling diphthong *éow* into a rising one. The second, though inferior, element acquires such a preponderance, in consequence of the addition of *w*, that when it becomes obviously necessary to simplify the triphthong which has developed, or is about to do so, *o* may prevail over *e*. An attempt



to pronounce the O.E. *tréowd* with a falling diphthong would prove a difficult task. But in the case of *āw ōw* from *law*, an accent-shift within the diphthong is out of the question; *ea* results, here as everywhere, in *æ*, and like *æ* before *w*, may develop the phonetic value *æ̃* and thereupon become *ā ǣ* instead of *ē*. Therefore not even a case like *chase* (= *chās*), by the side of *chēs* from O.E. *clās*, postulates a falling diphthong *ēa*, but should be accounted for exactly like *bāre* by the side of *bēre* from O.E. *bær*.

50. In cases where O.E. vowel-lengths were shortened early they develop like the corresponding originally short sounds: *ā* becomes *ǣ*: *gättqothed* (from M.E. *goot*, O.E. *gāt*), *yclād* (from O.E. *clādian*); *ē* becomes *ĕ*: *grĕtte*, *kĕpte*, *wĕpte*, *tĕn* (by the side of *fĕtĕne*); *ī* becomes *ĭ*, more rarely *i*: *wĭsdom*, *smit* (*smitth* from *smitēd*), *light* 'light' adj.; *ō* becomes *o*: *softe*; *ū* becomes *u*: *but*, *us*; *eo* becomes *ĕ*: *crĕpte*, *rĕst* (by the side of *brĕest*), *fĕl*; *io ie* becomes *i* or *ĭ*: *light* 'light' subst.; *fl* (by the side of *fĕl*), *sĭknesse*.

Several different developments proceeded from shortened *æ*, *ea*, *y*. In O.E. *ē* occurred by the side of *æ*; in position we may therefore in the first instance expect *æ* beside *e*; the latter is bound to become *ĕ*; *æ* in Chaucer's district generally becomes *a*, and in exceptional cases *ĕ*. On the whole *a* is more frequent in Chaucer: *bad*, *mad*, *lasten*, *ladde*—*lad* from *lēden*, *dradde*—*drad* from *drēden*, *spradde* from *sprēden*, *swatte* from *swēten*, *lafte* from *lēven*, to which belongs the p.p. (*y*)*laft*, and more rarely, *left*; cf. Blaunche, 42. Conversely, though less frequently: *dredde*, *yspred*; *ywet* = O.E. *jewēted*; *lesse* is more frequent than *lasse*, whether owing to the following *ss* (cf. *messe* -*nesse*), or by analogy with



*læst*; *shepherd* only with *ǣ*, whereas *sheep* only with *ē*, likewise exclusively *slēpte*, because *slēpen* is the ordinary form, but especially on account of the not yet extinct strong pret. *sleep*; only *mente*, *lente*, because in the former half of the M.E. period *mende*, *lende*, with long, or at least variable, *e* were the rule. O.E. *ea* in position regularly became *æ*, and thereupon *a*: *chapman*, *rafte* from *ræven*, *straw*. The newly formed pret. *bette* (provided it really occurs in Chaucer, cf. § 134), is, however, connected primarily with the strong preterite *beet*, not *bēten*. The form of the positive *grēet* has influenced the compar. *gretter*, and *grettest* formed by analogy with it [or it must be derived from the mutated O.E. *grýtra*]. In *Edward* we have *e* on account of the prolonged survival of the quantity in composition.

O.E. *y* when not in position almost always becomes *i*, but in position, like original short *y*, sometimes *i*, sometimes *e*: *kyd*: *hyd*, S.T. 462/1943 [E. 1943], a rime without real value as evidence, but which tradition has sufficiently accredited in this form; on the other hand, *hed* or *yhed* (: *bed*), Leg. 208, Blaunche, 175.

#### VOWELS WITHOUT PRIMARY ACCENT.

51. So far we have considered the Germanic vowels in originally accented syllables (*i.e.* under primary stress) with reference to their actual accentuation. Now if the originally accented syllable transferred its accent to the syllable immediately following, the quality of its vowel-sound would scarcely be modified, but the quantity would probably be



somewhat shortened. This shortening cannot, however, have been very considerable, for the reason that the accent-shift occurred only very occasionally, and mainly in response to the exigencies of the metre, whilst on the whole the original accentuation prevailed, and maintained itself unimpaired in current speech. We have no means of finding a more definite answer to the question thus raised: the originally tonic syllable occurs in rime only when it is actually accented, the traditional spelling justly concerns itself only with normal accentuation, and the rare cases in which the shifting of the accent has had permanent consequences—for instance, in the first syllable of N.E. *mankind* or *freewill*—reveal no essential difference in the treatment of the vowels in question.

52. The syllables capable of accent may be divided, according to their position in a word, into two classes: such as regularly bear the secondary accent, and such as are sometimes unaccented, sometimes bear the principal accent. To the first class belongs, for instance, the third syllable in *Canterbury*, *Holderness*, *alderman*, *martyrdom*, to the second, the second syllable in *millere*, *writynge*, *clennesse*, *worthy*. One and the same part of a compound, or one and the same suffix, may belong both to the first and the second classes; cf., for instance, *martyrdom* and *wisdom*, *alderman* and *goodman*, *worthily* and *shaply*, *buxomnesse* and *clennesse*; in one and the same word even, by mere syncope, a syllable may pass from the first to the second class, or, by the insertion of a syllable, from the second to the first: *trewely* and *trewly*,



*hardly* and *hardely*, etc. The syllables under secondary accent and the syllables of the second class in case of actual accentuation will therefore be considered conjointly. The vowels of these syllables, in so far as they appear in rime, display on the whole, as the result of analogous development, the same characteristics as originally tonic syllables. It will suffice to quote a few examples, which may be followed by the discussion of cases requiring special comment. Short vowels: *lernyng(e)*, O.E. *leorning leornung*; *smoterlich*, O.E. *-llc*; *ydelnesse*, O.E. *idelnes*; *Holdernessee*, O.E. *-næs*; *alderman*, O.E. *ealdormon*, *-man*; *newefangel*, origin obscure (from *newfangle-nesse*), *Edward*, O.E. *Eadweard*; *Engelond*, *Northumberlond*, *furlong*, O.E. *furhlōng furlang*. Long vowels: *body*, O.E. *bodij*; *holȳ*, O.E. *hālīj*; *boterflye*, O.E. *butorflēoȳe*; *fifteene* (cf., on the other hand, simple *tēn*), *hertelēȳs*, *routheleȳs*, etc., O.E. *-lēas*, *nathelēȳs*, O.E. *nādelēs*; *algāte*, *algātes* 'always' from *allegate*, from O.N. *alla gōtu*, but nom. sg. *gata*, M.E. *gāte* 'way, gate'; *nyhtyngāle*, O.E. *nihtezale*; *knight-hood*, *prentishood*, O.E. *-hād*, *househōld*, *cokewōld*, *Osewōld*; *martyrdōom*; *neighebour*. Diphthongs, for instance, in *felawe* (O.N. *fēlage*), *windowe* (O.N. *vindōuga*). Variable *i* in *frendshiȳe*, *felawshiȳe* (O.E. *-sciȳe*), etc., *ū* in *Canterbury*.

53. The O.E. suffix *-ij*, no matter of what origin, always becomes *y*, i.e. *ī* from *ii*. The O.E. composition suffix *-llc* *-lice* becomes *-lich* *-liche*; the more usual *-lȳ* might trace back to O.N. *-ligr* *-liga* [if M.E. *l* from O.E. *ic* did not prove the possibility of a phonetic change]. The O.E. adj. *jellc*, on the other hand, results in *lik*, more rarely *lich*, and the



adverb also appears in both forms: (y)*like* and (y)*liche*.

54. The suffix *-ere*, for instance in *mellere*, *ridere*, as well as the suffix *-stere*, expanded by analogy with the former from O.E. *-stre*, as in *beggesterē*, has generally *ē* in Chaucer (sole exception *wongēr* for *wongere*: *dextrēr*, S.T. 197/2102 [B. 2102]) in other M.E. poets it more frequently has *ĕ*. The corresponding O.E. suffix is commonly spelt *-tře*, not because the *ĕ* had always been closed, but because in a syllable under secondary stress the *ĕ*-sound was generally represented by *e*, as *dægréd*, *hīréd*, *Aelfréd*, etc., prove; cf. Anglia V. 3. O.E. *Hierusalēm Jerusalēm* seems also—and that, indeed, in all dialects—to contain *ĕ* in the final syllable, as proved by Orrm's spelling *Jerrsalēm*, and the same sound holds for *Jerusalem* (pronounced *Jerusalēm*) in Chaucer.

NOTE. Sievers (P.B.B. IX. 200) and also Sweet, assume short *ĕ* in O.E. *Aelfred*, *dæfred*, *hīred*. Now the long vowel in weakly accented syllables of this kind was doubtless capable of shortening, especially when the meaning of the component parts of a word had ceased to be felt. Thus *hīréd* perhaps became *hīred* already in the O.E. period (though we have not the slightest justification for assuming the shortness of the *e* in all cases, to say nothing of texts so early as the ninth century), M.E. *hired* and *hird*. But it is otherwise in the case of *dægréd* and *Aelfréd*, the long *ĕ* (or *ĕ*) of which is proved as late as the thirteenth century. Cf. *Alfrēd*: *rēd*, Owl and Nightingale, 761. But only a pedant could fail to take into consideration not only W.S. *-réd* in relation to *réd*, but also the suffix *-tře* and the *e* in *Jerusalēm*, and anyone with a fairly comprehensive grasp of M.E. phonetic conditions as a whole, cannot doubt but that in an unaccented syllable O.E. *ĕ* might well stand for *ĕ*.

55. The composition suffix *-hȝod*, O.E. *hād*, has



acquired an etymologically identical doublet, *-hēðd*, *-hēde*, also *hēde*: *maydenhēðd*, *goodlyhēðd*, *chapmanhēde*, *maydenhēde*, *maydenhēde*, *wommanhēde*, *wommanhēede*, etc.; Mdu. *-hede* contained, apparently, *ē* (Deut. Litteraturzt, 1884, Col. 125); is the closed sound derived from Frisian or some other Low German dialect? [Grdr. I. 874 a mutated secondary form *-hæd* is assumed for O.E.]

56. Amongst the syllables which may be accented or unaccented, and which in Chaucer's time were as a rule unaccented in the language of every-day life, there are some which contain an originally long vowel shortened even under the ictus. Thus *Dunstan* (O.E. *Dūnstān*) occurs S.T. 377/1501 [D. 1502] riming with *man*, and this form of the name seems in the M.E. period to have been as current in the South as *Dunston*. *a* for *o* points to a weakening of the quantity which may be accounted for by the lost perception of the meaning of the name. A similar weakening occurs in *wedlok* (O.E. *-lác*) as well as in *-dom*, *wisdom*, *freedom* (in Orm the *o* was still long) as compared with *martyrdoom*.

57. If the syllables belonging to the second class and capable of accent are nevertheless unaccented, the quantity of the long vowels contained in them is without doubt diminished. But the quality of the vowels capable of accent probably remained essentially the same in either case.

58. The vowels of generally unaccented, or at any rate weakly accented monosyllables deviate but little from the rules laid down for syllables under primary accent. The prepositions *in*, *with*, *of*, *for*,



*up, thurgh*; *bȳ, tō*, and the conjunction *that* call for no special comment so far as the relation of the O.E. to the M.E. vowels is concerned. But in the prepositions *on, from*, an *o* occurs where the original tonic syllable requires an *a* in Chaucer's dialect. This *o* has become so firmly established, that it maintains itself in *fro* after the loss of *-m*, and occurs even when the words in question, being used adverbially or in composition, acquire the accent: *to and fro*, *upon*. The *o* in *on, upon*, used post-positively, is capable of lengthening, at least in so far that it can rhyme with long *ō*, *on* : *goon*, Blaunche, 1217, *upon* : *gon*, S.T. 547/564 [G. 563]. On the other hand, the conjunction '*and*,' in contradistinction to *hond, lond*, and all similar words, always contains *a*—a fact which is more difficult of explanation, but reaches back to the O.E. period. Noteworthy is also the differentiation between weakly accented or unaccented *not*, and strongly accented *nought*.

NOTE. The particle *unto* is not the result of *on* and *tō*, but is probably correctly derived by Stratmann from Olg. *unto*.

59. The syllables incapable of accent may be divided into prefixes and syllables containing weak *e*.

60. In prefixes incapable of accent O.E. long vowels appear shortened: *ā-* becomes *a-*, cf. *arysen, abyden* (perhaps *ā* had become short already in the O.E. period), *tō-* becomes *to-*, cf. *tohēwen, toshrēden*, but not in *tōshreden*, etc. *y-*, also, is the shortening of *ii-jī-* (O.E. *je*), but retains the sound of pure *i* (not *ī*). *e* has disappeared from O.E. *je* in *yēde* from *jetode*. As to the O.E. short vowels, note that only medially the closed sound passes into the open one :



*of-*, *for-*, *with-*, but that otherwise the original sound is preserved: *bi-* with *i*; but, by the side of it, *be-* with weak *e*; Chaucer seems to prefer *bi-* to *be-*. In *bileven* 'remain' the *i* may also be omitted: Troil. IV. 1357. In *blynnan* the vowel had suffered syncope already in O.E. O.E. *blinnan* goes back to \**be-linnan* [or more probably according to Grdr. I.<sup>2</sup> 390, by analogy with Gothic *af-linnan*, to *of-linnan*].

Here belong also prepositions which have become completely assimilated to a following word, as *a* (O.E. *an on*, also *d*, or already *a* (?), O.N. *d*), *bi* (from *bi*): *abouten* (O.E. *abútan* from *on-be-útan*), *alýve* by the side of *onlyve*, *biýve*, or usually *blýve*.

**61. Weak *e*** occurs, in addition to *be-*, the article *the*, the negation *ne* 'not.'

(α) In final syllables, namely:

I. Corresponding to O.E. unaccented or weakly accented vowels, in the following stem-formative or inflexional suffixes: *e*, *es*, *ed*, *er*, *el*, *en*, *a*, *as*, *ad*, *ol*, *on*, *or*, *u*, *um*. The last suffix has maintained itself unweakened only in *whilom*.

NOTE. The verbal suffix *-est* (O.E. *-est*) 2 pers. sing. ind. is not absolutely toneless, and the superlative suffix *-est* (O.E. *-ost*, also *-est*) is distinctly capable of accent.

II. As the result of analogy in the final syllable of the sing. of some substantives, whose nominative, and in some cases also accus. sing. had a consonantal termination in O.E., for instance, in *sorwe*, *dale*, cf. § 199 ff. more rarely in the final syllable of an uninflected adjective, cf. § 231.

(β) in other places:

I. In compounds and derivatives the weak *-e*



occurs frequently in the stem-formative suffix of the first part, or determining word : *nosethirles*, *morwemilk*, *openly*, *kyndely*, *trewely*, *ydelnesse*, *kyndenesse*. Not infrequently an *-e* foreign to the stem-ending of the simple word is inserted here : this occurs especially in composition of an adjective with *-ly* : *hardely*, *boldely*, etc., from O.E. *heardlic(e)*, *bealdlic(e)*, but also *tréowlic(e)*.

II. In improper composition or parathesis weak inflexional *e* sometimes occurs medially : *dayesje*, O.E. *dæges ēje*, *Oxenford*, O.E. *Oxnafoord*.

III. O.E. weak *e* or *o*, as rational or irrational medial vowel in inflected simple stems, generally drops : *fadres* (O.E. *fæderas*) ; but it is preserved between *v* and a continuous consonant : *hevenes*, *sevene* ; in these cases a weak *e* is even inserted, which either did not occur at all in O.E., or was generally syncopated : *evere*, O.E. *æfre*, *develes*, O.E. *déofles* (rarely *déofoles*). Also occasionally after *th* : *bretheren*.

IV. O.E. *o*, *e* (earlier *ō*), as connecting vowel in the pret. and p.p. of weak verbs of the second class, also results in weak *e* : *lovede*, *asked(e)*, *loved*, *asked*. In the same way O.E. *e* in the corresponding forms of weak verbs of the first class : *wered(e)* 'wore.' Here, in certain cases, an *e* is inserted where in O.E. the connecting vowel had disappeared owing to old syncope ; cf. § 16, Note 1.

The disappearance of weak *e* by apocope, syncope, contraction, etc., whether it be merely in pronunciation, or also in orthography, will be discussed partly in the chapter on Accidence, partly in that on Prosody.



62. In some dialects the weak *e* in final syllables like *-es -ed* alternates with *i* and *u*. Chaucer occasionally uses the *i*-forms for the sake of rime: *werkis* (for *werkes*): *derkis*, *ywoundid*: *wounde hid*. Apart from such cases as were discussed in § 328, *e* seems to be the more appropriate symbol for the weak vowel in Chaucer's dialect.

#### B. ROMANCE VOWELS.

63. In the main only vowels of French words need be considered, the majority of which are Anglo-Norman in form. Only occasional reference will be made to Romance elements of other origin. But on the other hand, such Latin or Græco-Latin words will be discussed as have been influenced in form by the French. Other words of classical origin will be commented on separately.

The Romance vowels in tonic syllables in case of actual accentuation will be considered first.

#### TONIC VOWELS.

64. **Accented vowels of an originally tonic syllable are long :**

(α) When final in a word.

(β) When final in a syllable, in which connection it should be noted that a following mute + liquid is frequently, though not invariably, considered initial in the following syllable.

(γ) Generally when medial before a simple consonant.



(δ) Before certain consonantal combinations, which can be more conveniently specified in the discussion of the vowels severally.

NOTE. A simple, but long (geminated) consonant may in some cases be shortened, when the preceding vowel will regularly become long. This applies to *rr* and *ss*.

65. The long vowels are : *ī, ē, ĕ, ā, ā\*, ō, ō, ū, ū*.

66. *i* = O.Fr. *i* : *crĭj, mercĭj, hardĭj, flĭj* ; *melodĭe, crĭje, plĭje, justifĭje, brĭbe, vĭce, nĭce* ; *bĭble, cĭdre* (on the other hand, *delivre, considre*, cf. § 78) ; *strĭjf, desĭr, avĭs, prĭs, delit* : further O.Fr. *ie, i* in *squĭre (esquierre)* and O.Fr. *e* in the pl. *dĭs* from *dee*.

67. *ē* corresponds to :

(α) O.Fr. *e* from Lat. *a* (exception cf. § 68 a) : *compeēr, sopeēr, peēr, frĕre, cleēr, appĕre* V., *auctoriteē, degreē, entreē, piteē, seē* 'seat,' likewise in the pl. *degreēs, seēs*.

(β) O.Fr. *e* = Lat. *ē* or Grk. *η*, rarely Lat. *æ*, Grk. *αι* in an open syllable : learned words and proper names are chiefly in question : *procĕde, succĕde, Diomĕde, Ganyĕde* : *diadĕme* ; *Polixĕne, Athĕnys* ; *planĕte, prophĕte, quiĕte, mansuĕte* ; *dissevēre, hyĕne*. Here belongs also Rom. *e* = Lat. *æ*, Grk. *οι*, as in *tragĕdie, comĕdie*, which are probably derived from the Italian.

(γ) O.Fr. *ie*, that became monophthongised in Anglo-Norman ; the diphthong is still frequently used in M.E. texts, but in the better Chaucer MSS. only in isolated cases : *mescheef, grief, achĕve, grĕve, relĕve* ; *fĕvere* ; *contĕne, mayntĕne, sustĕne* ; the suffix *-eer* from *-ier*, as in *archĕer, bacheleĕr, bokeleĕr, carpenteĕr, daungeĕr, squiĕer*, etc., likewise, *-ĕre* from



-iere as in *chamberēre*, *manēre*, *mateēre*, *preyēre*, *ryvēre*, *tresorēre*; *chēre*, the pres. of the fin. verb in *enquēre*, *requēre* (for the inf. cf. § 68 β, for the p.p. *requered* cf. Angl. I. 551), inf. and fin. verb, in *refēre*.

(δ) Anglo-Norman monophthongisation from O.Fr. *ue* = Lat. *ū* not in position; *beef*, *preef*, *reprēef*, *prēve*, *reprēve*, *remēve*, *kēvere*, 'cover'; *peēple*. Here belongs also *kevere* 'to recover,' Troil. I. 917, although the root-vowel is due to Lat. *u*, not *o*.

NOTE. In the consideration of the verbs it should be borne in mind that the strong forms of the Romance present provide the type for the whole of the English inflexion. Only the O.Fr. inf. *querre* was suited for adoption into M.E. without further change. Hence the infinitive of this verb has in Chaucer a vowel differing from that of the fin. verb in the present.

NOTE 2. With reference to β note that proper names ending in *-ete*, the *e* of which = Lat. *ē*, Grk. *η*, have sometimes a closed, sometimes an open *ē*: *Admēte*, *Lēte*; *Crēte* and *Crēte*; *Polyphēte*.

68. *ē* corresponds to :

(α) O.Fr. *e* = Lat. *a* before *l*: *condicionēel*, *effectueēel*, *eterneēel*, *natureēel*, *temporeēel*, *textueēel*. Here belongs also *crewēel*, which is derived by modern Romance philologists from a form \**crudalis*, instead of *crudelis*.

(β) O.Fr. *e* = Lat. *e* or *ī*, also *ae*, in Lat. or Rom. position, likewise Germanic *e* in position. The length of the vowel is in this case the result of the shortening of a long consonant (simplification of a gemination): *Fynystēre*, the infinitives *enquēre* and *requēre*; *wēre* by the side of *werre* (O.Fr. *werre*, *guerre* from Ohg. *wërra*); *ciprēes* instead of *cipresse*, *prēes* by the side of *presse*. Here belong also words



like *Grâce*, *Boïce*, *Lucrèce* by the side of *Boesse*, *Lucresse*.

(γ) The monophthongisation of *ei* = older French *ei* and older French *ai*, which are not differentiated in the examples quoted: *encreēs*, *dēēs*, *lēēs*, *relēēs*, *pēēs*, *ēse*, *disēse*, *apēse*, *countrepēse*, *plēse*, *displēse*, *sēse*; also in *greesse*, *encreēsse*, *incrēce*, *relēsse* (the *ss* of which denotes a short voiceless spirant, cf. § 109 β); *countrefēte*, *plēte*, *trēte*. Evidently the monophthongisation takes place chiefly before *s* and *t* (also occasionally before *r*, upon which cf. Note).

(δ) The contraction from pre-tonic *ei* or *e* with tonic *ē* or *a*: *sēēl* (*seiel*), *veēl* (*veël*); *rēme* (*reime*); *meēne* (*meien*).

(ε) The name of the town *Lēpe*.

NOTE. Before *r* the monophthongisation of *ei* or *ai* becomes closed *ē*: *powēer*, *grammēere*, probably only by analogy with the numerous forms in *-īr*, *-ēre* = *-ier*, *-iere*. *Prēche*, O.Fr. *preschier*, has open as well as closed *ē*.

69. *ā* corresponds to O.Fr. *a*: *fāce*, *grāce*, *māce*, *plāce*, *chāce*, *defāce*, *embrāce*, *pāce*, *purchāce*; *āge*, *cāge*, *pāge*, *rāge*, *corāge*, *lynāge*; *māle*, *pāle*, plurals like *cardināles*, or like *roiāles*, *blāme*, *dāme*, *fāme*, *defāme* V.; *declāre*; *dāte*, *abāte*, *debāte*; *cāve*, *sāve*; *āble*, *fāble*, *stāble*, *tāble*, *acceptāble*, *abhomyñāble*; *charitāble*, *chaungeāble*; *cardiācle*, *triācle*, *myrācle*, *obstācle*; with inorganic *-e lāke*; *chaar*; *aas*, *caas*, *laas*, *paas*, *trespaas*, *purchās*, *solaas*; *achaat*, *debaat*, *estaat*, *maat*, *annunciaat*, *consecraat*, *curaat*. This list obviously includes a number of learned words. Proper names like *Diāne*, *Dāne* (Daphne), *Adriāne* (Ariadne), may be mentioned here, also the adjectival substantive



*Cordewāne* (leather from Cordova), as well as the name of the (originally Genoese?) coin *Jāne*.

NOTE. The plural form *mynstrāles*, S.T. 195/2035 [B. 2035] need not be immediately derived from M.Lat. *ministerialis ministralis*, the probable etymon of O.Fr. *menestrel*, since even in O.Fr. *-al* is more frequent than *-el=alis*, and there is definite proof of *menestral menestrale* used as an adjective; cf. Freymond, *Jongleurs und Menestrels*, p. 10 f.

70. *ā̃* denotes the nasalised *ā*, or, more strictly speaking, the sound which in M.E. represents Romance nasalised *a*. It was, apparently, a darker *ā̃*, as the spelling *au*, which frequently alternates with *a*, seems to indicate. The sound is necessarily long, hence it never occurs before *-nk*, for instance in *frank*. It occurs before *mb*, *ng*, *nc*, *nd*, *nt*: *chāumbre* *chambre*; *āungel* *angel*; *chāunge*; *balāunce*, *chāunce*, *dāunce*, *penāunce*, *plesāunce*, *Custāunce*; in these cases the spelling is also frequently *-ance*; *comāunde*; *āunt*, *geāunt*, *hāunt*, *servāunt*.

71. *ō̃* generally corresponds to O.Fr. open *o* (*ò*) from Lat. *au*, *ō*: *stōor*, *tresōor*, *restōre*, *sōre*; *rōse*, *clōse*, *dispōse*, *suppōse*; *cōte*, *nōte*, *Pertelōte*; *memōrie*, *stōrie*; *cloos*, *lōs*; the vowel is also long before *st*: *cōost*, *hōost*, *rōost*. In isolated cases *ō̃* corresponds to Fr. *ò* from Lat. *ō*, for instance, in *nōble*; this is regularly the case with the suffix Lat. *-ōri*: *glōrie*, *victōrie*. Exceptionally *ō̃* occurs, corresponding to French nasalised *o* from Lat. *ō* before *n*: *persone*, N.E. *person* (but on the other hand, *persoun*, N.E. *parson*), *proporciōn* (by the side of more frequent *proporcioun*). The *ō̃* forms of these words must be looked upon as later borrowings from the French, whereas the corresponding *ou* forms are part of the



inherited Anglo-Norman stock. The  $\bar{o}$  sound occurs also in proper names like *Absalôn*, *Demophôn*, *Hermýn* (Hermione), *Amazônes*, *Palamôn* (by the side of *Palamoun*); *Nabugodonosôr*; *Nichanôr(e)*.

72.  $\bar{o}$  occurs very rarely in Romance words, but it is found in *pôore* 'poor' as a monophthongisation of the diphthong *ou* (*povre*, *poure*, *poure*, *poore*), and in the foreign word *cynanôme*.

*Fool*, *trône*, *Alcyône*, *Alcyoon*, probably also *Rôme*, fluctuate between  $\bar{o}$  and  $\bar{e}$ .

NOTE. *Poure* occurs fairly often by the side of *poore*, within the metre, but not in rime. *Rôme* was either pronounced with  $\bar{o}$  and  $\bar{e}$ , as in *Mdu.*, or it had  $\bar{o}$  exclusively; in the latter case, the name *Jerome* (which is less probable) ought also to have contained  $\bar{o}$ , since the two names are linked in rime. Troil. v. 300 rimes *dispone* : *to done*. Since *doon*, *doone* may also occur with the  $\bar{o}$  sound, the latter must be assumed here, and *dispône* must be accounted for like *proporciôn*, *persône* (§ 71).

73.  $\bar{u}$ , represented by *ou ow*, corresponds to the so-called O.Fr. closed *o* ( $\delta$ ), Anglo-Norman *u*, the sources of which are Lat.  $\bar{o}$  and *u*, also to Lat. *au* before consonants which have been dropped (*au*, *ou*, *uu*, in contradistinction to the ordinary development *au*, *ou*, *go*, *q̄q̄*), finally to Lat.  $\bar{o}$  before resonants. Examples: *avow*, *prow*; *avowe*, *allowe*, *coroune crowne*, *soune* V., *expoune*; *croupe*; *houre*, *honoure* V., *laboure*; *doute*, *route*; *couple*, *souple*; *soun*, *persoun* (cf. *persône*, § 71), *passioun*, *resoun*, *devocioun*, *proporcioun* (by the side of *proporciôn*, § 71), *Alisoun*, *Amphioun*, *Cipioun*, *Citheroun*, *Genyloun*, *Palamoun* (beside *Palamôn*), *Neroun*, *Sampsoun*, *Symoun*, etc.; *clamour*, *colour*, *flour*, *honour*, *labour*, *tour*; *amorous*, *bounteous*, *curious*, etc. The



sound is always long before *n*-combinations: *pronounce, confounde, habounde, count, mount, accounte, encountre*, etc.; as a rule also before *r*+consonant: *bourde, gourde, court, cours, recours, sours*; coalescence of a pre-tonic vowel with *ū* in *emperour, mirour, round*, etc.

**74. *ū* corresponds to :**

(α) O.Fr. *u* = *ū* from Lat. *ū*, rarely *ũ*, occasionally from Germanic *û*: *vertu; murwe; crude, fortune, commune, cure, creature, nature, conjure, endure, excuse, refuse; duc, pur; rude; Huwe*. Pre-tonic vowel has coalesced with *û* in *due, armure*; synizesis is apparent in *seur* (perhaps = *syūr*, *sy* produces in N.E. *sure* the *sh*-sound, whereas *û* develops as usual).

(β) In some cases O.Fr. *iv, iu*: *eschu* 'shy,' *eschewe, eschue* V., *sewe* V. The spelling *ew* occurs also elsewhere when the sound precedes a vowel: *meuwe* beside *murwe* (Fr. *mue*), *remewe* V. This spelling, as well as the origin of *eschewe, sewe*, seems to indicate that the M.E. *ū*-sound was akin to the *ö*-sound, and was perhaps almost equivalent to the Alsatian pronunciation of German *ü*, or Fr. *ou*.

(γ) Fr. *ui* = *üi* (with the exception of the cases mentioned, § 90), the spelling *ui* is retained here: *suit, bruit, fruit*. O.Fr. *u* before palatalised *n* should be similarly dealt with, since the latter when final in an originally tonic syllable became *in* in M.E.: *expugne, repugne, expüne, repüne* from *expüine, repüine*. In this case the original spelling is also retained.

**75.** Transition of *û* to *ū*, which is very general in other M.E. dialects, hardly ever occurs in Chaucer. In Sir Thopas he permits himself *armour armoure* (*due*,



however, possibly to some other suffix), instead of *armure*. The form *Arthour* need not necessarily be considered a derivation from the French. There is apparently a transition from *û* to *ũ* in the verb *honouren honuren*, which occurs, Mooder of God, 64, and Venus, 23, and in *chanteplure* for *chanteploure*, Anelida, 320, in both cases in a rime on *ũ*. In the latter word, however, the *ũ*-sound might be due to younger French *eu* instead of Anglo-Norman *u*.

76. The traditional spelling of Romance vowel-lengths agrees on the whole with that of the corresponding Germanic sounds. Only, in Romance words, the representation of *ī*, *ē*, *ō* by *y*, *ee*, *oo* is rather less frequent. In a normalised system of orthography it would be advisable to apply the same principles in both cases. *ā* in a closed syllable should be more consistently represented by the double symbol than is the case in the MSS. *ā*\* should be written *au*, and *ũ*, *u*, *uw* (for *ew*), *ui*, *ug*, as the case might demand. In words like *duc*, *pur*, the appropriate symbol would be *ũ*, to obviate the possibility of a confusion of *ũ* with *u*.

77. The short vowels will be most conveniently treated in conjunction with those of variable quantity. They are short generally before a consonant gemination or consonant-group (with the exception of certain combinations), variable chiefly in cases of doubtful position, occasionally also before a simple consonant. Further details will be given in the discussion of each separate sound. The quality may be determined as follows: *i* or *ī*, *e*, *a*, *o*, *u*, *ũ*. With regard to the last sound we may add that it



probably corresponded more closely to an *ö* pronounced without lip-rounding, *i.e.* the Dutch short *u* in *dus*, *tusschen*, etc.

78. *i* is short in words like *epistle*, *divinistre*, *registre*, where it is followed by another consonant, naturally also in the rare case in which a long explosive follows, as in *quit*, p.p. from *quiten*, and before *ch* (= *tsh*) in *riche*, *chiche*. In all these cases the *i*-sound possibly occurred already in Chaucer, whereas O.Fr. has only pure *i*. *i* must be considered variable: sometimes before mute + liquid, for instance, in *delivre*, *considre*, further in popular forms of proper names, as *Austyn*, *Martyn*; probably also in the appellation *sire*.

79. *ɛ*, corresponding to O.Fr. open *e*, is short before a long consonant: *dette*; *noblesse*, *richesse*, *countesse*, etc., *dressen*, *pressen*, *Lucretse*, *Boesse*. If, as may be the case with the two last-mentioned names, shortening of the consonant takes place, the vowel is lengthened (*Lucrèce*, *Boèce*), and thus the quantity of *ɛ* in the verb *cesse* is also variable; note further *werre* by the side of *wère*. Amongst consonantal combinations which allow the preceding vowels to remain short, the *n*-combinations in learned words are of primary importance: *argument*, *present*, *prudent*, *defense*, *excellence*, *amenden*, *defenden*; *rk*, for instance, in *clerk* (O.E. already *cleric*, O.Fr. *clerc*); *rs* in *vers*, *divers*, *herse*.

*ɛ* is variable before *st*: *arrest*, *forest*, *best* (O.Fr. *beste*), *tempest* (O.Fr. *tempeste*), *feste*, *geste*, *requeste*; these words are linked in rime with English words both in *-est* and *-ĕst*, though these two groups are



not linked with each other. (In words like *Alceste*, *Almageste*, the *ε* is probably short.) *ε* is probably also variable in *-ien* (from *-ianus*), the monophthongisation of which in *parisschen* is exceptional, the ending being generally dissyllabic: *Arabyen*, *Egipcien*, *Percien*, *Marcien*, *Octovyen*, *Venerien*, in which group include *Galien* (*Galenus*), and in *-el* (*-ellus*, *-ellum*): *catel*, *hostel*, *pikerel*, to which add the adj. *fel* (O.Fr. *fels felon* from Ohg. \**fillo*) and the name *Daniel*.

80. *a* is short in words like *Anne*, *Osanne*, *Susanne*, *emplastre*, *idolastre*, probably also before *r*-combinations: *barge*, *charge*, *arme*, *charme*, *art*, *part*, *Mars*, *Tars*; before *nk*: *frank*, *flank*; exceptionally only before *nd* (§ 70) in *gerland*.

We must assume *a* to have been variable before *st*: *chaste*, *haste*, also in the p.p. *past* (the present of this verb has *pāce*, as well as *passe*), in the ending *-arie*: *adversarie*, *contrarie*, *mercenarie*, perhaps in names like *Nicholas*, *Thopas*; finally, in the learned French suffixes: *-al* and *-an* (Lat. *-alis* and *-anus*): *animal*, *celestial*, *principal*, *special*, *temporal*; *Aurelian*, *Damyan*, *Theban*, etc.

81. *ø* is short, for instance, in *port*, *conforten*, *disporten*, probably also in *post*, *cost*, short or variable in *cofre*, *philosophre*.

82. *u* is short in *suffre*, *justen* 'joust,' exceptionally before *r*-combinations (§ 73): *purs*, *turne* beside *tourne*, variable in *covre* by the side of *kēvre* (the latter from *cuevre*, the former from later *cuvre*, *covre*).

83. *ü* is short in *just*, *humble*, variable probably in *juge*, *jugen*, *refuge*, etc.



NOTE. Short *u* may appropriately be represented by *ü*. Accordingly, in a closed syllable, *u* would be pronounced *u*, *ü* -*ü*, *ü* -*u*; in an open syllable *u* would be either long *ü*, or, in words like *juge*, variable *ü*, whilst *ou* would always stand for *ü*.

84. If an originally tonic syllable retains only secondary stress, the quality of its vowel will remain unchanged, nor will the quantity be weakened to any extent. On the whole, long vowels will remain long, though the possibility of their being shortened is not excluded. This is specially apparent in the case of trisyllabic or polysyllabic words in *-ous*, in which a reversal of the positions of the primary and secondary accents respectively was certainly more frequent than in other words, but which are nevertheless almost invariably spelt with *ou*, and with *u* only in cases where they rime with words in *us*: *amorus*, *courageus*, *curius*, *desirus*, *despitus*, etc.

85. If the originally tonic syllable loses its accent altogether, the quantity is, without doubt, appreciably weakened. But a distinct abbreviation of originally long vowels must have been the exception even here, and probably did not take place until the position of the new accent was definitely fixed, whereupon the quality of the vowel would also become affected by the shift.

#### PRE-TONIC VOWELS.

86. The vowels of originally pre-tonic syllables do not admit of so accurate and detailed an exposition as the tonic vowels, as neither they nor their Romance antecedents can be subjected to the most valuable of all tests, that of rime. A few general observations must therefore suffice:



(a) *i* = O.Fr. *i*, rarely *e*, as in *chivalrye*, *pilgrymage*, *myster*. The vowel is always short where it remains unaccented, for instance, in *philosophie*, *Alisandre*, *precious*, *pité*, *squier*. But even when the accent falls upon it, it rarely becomes long, excepting when followed by another vowel: *squier*, *prioresse*, perhaps also, in isolated cases, in an open syllable immediately preceding the originally tonic syllable: *týrāunt*. As a rule, *i* is short: *plte*, *clte*, *príve*, *tíranne*, *chívalrye*, *condícioun*. The *i*-sound occurs in an originally closed syllable: *míster*, *gípser*, *pílgrymage*, *Arístotle*, but whether, as in N.E., also in words like *plte*, *príve*, *condícioun*, is very doubtful.

(β) The *e*-sounds may be closed, open, or weak. Open, unaccented syllables contain either closed or weak *e*, closed *e* occurring chiefly in the first syllable of a word: *degree*, *departen*, *requesten*; weak *e*, on the other hand, in medial syllables: *chapeleyn*, *remenaunt*, *general*, *colerik*. Open *ē* occurs in closed syllables, whether accented or unaccented: *mērcy*, *sērgeant*, *dēstynēe*; in cases like *estaat*, *destroye*, *despit*, the *st* seems, as in N.E., to have been considered initial in the second syllable, so that the previous *e* was closed. Open *ē* seems, moreover, to have been the rule under the accent, as in *vérray*, where the doubling of the *r* (O.Fr. *verai*) is significant, *péril*, *rēmenant*, *rēlikes*. But *e* under the accent followed by another vowel is a long closed *ē*: *thēatre*, *crēature*; *e* is perhaps variable when accented and followed by a simple consonant and two syllables in hiatus: *espécial*, *dis-crécíoun*, *précious*. The long open *ē* is the monophthongisation of *ai*, Anglo-Norman *\*ēi*: *rēsoun*, *sēsoun*. Even when the accent falls upon the last



syllable in these words, as it originally did, the *ɛ* is probably long.

(γ) *a* = O.Fr. *a*, whether this sound traces back to Lat. *a* or other sources, as, for instance, to *ɛ* before *r*: *marchaunt*, *parfit*, *parde*. The sound is short in M.E. in an unaccented syllable: *array*, *creatour*, and in the majority of cases even when the syllable is accented: *ámorous*, *máladye*, *fámulier*, *cárpenter*, *páleys*, *Páris*, *jángler*, *párfít*. In the following cases the vowel becomes long when under the accent: (1) before a following vowel: example?; (2) before a simple consonant followed by two syllables in hiatus: *pácient*, *durácioun*, *dominácioun*, *ymaginácioun*, *grácious*, not, however, when a syllable follows consisting of the semi-vowel *i* + vowel: *cárie*, *márie*, nor, on account of *márie*, in *máriage*, not even when *ia* is distinctly dissyllabic; (3) before certain consonant combinations, especially before *-mb*, *-ng*, etc., in which case the sound becomes *ā*: *chámberleyn*, *dáunger*, *ddungerous*; (4) in certain cases before a simple consonant, if the originally tonic syllable immediately follows: *lábour*, *náture*, etc.

(δ) In pre-tonic syllables *o* and *u* cannot always be distinguished with certainty, since here also—and, indeed, to a greater extent than in tonic syllables—*o* may be used as the symbol for *u*, and we have no rime to serve as criterion. In O.Fr. closed *o* in a pre-tonic syllable seems not only to occur in cases where it develops under the accent, but it corresponds apparently also to Lat. *ɔ* in an open syllable, so that open *o* was, in the main, limited to cases where Lat. *ɔ* occurred in position—but not before resonants (perhaps also to Lat. *ɔ* and *ɔ̄* in



loan-words?). As regards Chaucer's linguistic usage, only the following statements can be made with any degree of certainty: (1) *u* appears in genuine Romance words (but not in loan-words) before a following vowel, before resonants, generally also in an open syllable immediately before the original accent, also where the original Lat. sound corresponds to Latin or Germanic short *u*. This M.E. *u* has a tendency towards length before a following vowel and before *n*-combinations (not, however, when the combination contains a third consonant), also when *u* forms a separate syllable: *coward*, *prowesse*; *montaigne mountayn*, *countour*, *countenance*; *outrage*. Perhaps also before *-rs*, but *courser* may have been affected by analogy with the simple word *cours* (cf. § 73). In all other cases, even where an original *n* is dropped, it tends to be short: *contre* 'country', *constable*, *cosyn*, *covenant*; *colour*, *corage*, *florissee*, *covert*; *sovereyn*, *norice*, *coveytyse*, *curteis curteisye*; *forage*, *burgeys*. Compounds, which are felt as such, must be explained by reference to their component parts: *covercheef*, cf. *covre*, § 82 (syncope and contraction in *courfew corfew*, for *coverfew*; similarly *keercheef*, S.T. 156/837 [B 837] for *keevercheef*, doublet of *covercheef*), *countrefeten*, *countrepleten*, *countrepesen*, although the particle *countre* is not used as an independent word in M.E., whereas the verb *countren*, *encountren*, is so used (§ 73). (2) *o* occurs where the original Romance sound corresponds to Lat. *o* (occasionally also *ō*) in position; in this case the short open sound is the rule: *proporcioun*, *hōstelrye*, *pōssible*; also where the vowel traces back to Lat. *au*: *pōvertē* or



*pouërte* with *ø*. *o* occurs further in loan-words, corresponding to Lat. *ø* or *ō* in an open syllable: *devocioun* (in spite of *devout*), *curiosite* (in spite of *curious*), *dominacioun*, the first *o* in *philosophre*, both in *philosophie*, etc.; in these cases the *o* is short and closed in an unaccented syllable. Under the accent it is probably generally an open *ø* that is lengthened when a vowel or two syllables in hiatus follow (*curiøsite*, *devøcioun*).

Since 'loan-word' is an elastic term in Romance languages, and it is not always possible to decide whether a Romance word incorporated into M.E. became, at a later period, assimilated to the Latin original or not, it is in some cases doubtful whether *o* or *u* is the sound to be assumed. Chaucer probably pronounced *conquere conquerour*, but should *comaunde* be pronounced with *o* or *u*? Is the first vowel in *dolour* to be determined in accordance with N.E. pronunciation, or with Anglo-Norman spellings like *dulor*? Even setting aside the influence of Latin, problems arise, the solution of which cannot be attempted here.

(*ε*) *ü* represents the corresponding O.Fr. sound. In a closed syllable it is short: *justise*, *humblesse*; in an open one, under the accent, always long: *füneral*, *cürious*, *fümetere*, *crüel*; in other cases probably variable: *usáunce*, *puntsshe*, *crüel*. As to the probable timbre of M.E. long and short *ü*, cf. §§ 74, 77. In one case it may seem doubtful whether the M.E. sound is not *u* rather than *ü*: namely, when a French *ü* in position occurs in an evidently learned word, where it may be derived either from Lat. *ü* or Lat. *û*, for instance, in words like *fructifÿe* (Lat. *û*), *multiplÿe* (Lat. *ü*).



## POST-TONIC VOWELS.

87. In an originally **post-tonic syllable** the vocalic element is supplied by weak *e*: *justise, feste, madame, bataille, nature*, etc. The apocope of the *e* will be discussed in the chapters on Accidence and Metre. Metathesis has taken place in *āungel* (O.Fr. *angele* = *anle*), as well as in *maister*, but in the pl. *maistres*; otherwise—at any rate in the better MSS.—this transposition occurs in the main only where an originally final *e* has become medial in consequence of composition, cf. *covre*, but *covercheef*.

Lat. *i* in hiatus has maintained itself as semi-consonantal, non-syllabic *i*, especially in the suffixes *ari* and *ori*, but also elsewhere: *adversárie, apothecárie, contrárie, Januárie, necessárie, tributárie, glórie, histórie, mémórie, victórie, tragédie, comédie* (both the latter from the Italian), *remédie, mystérie, stúdie, Mercúrie, porfúrie*. Here belong also verbs like *stúdien, contrárien, cárien, márien*, which have shifted their accent.

NOTE. By the side of *remédie* there occurs, and, indeed, more frequently, *rémedye*; instead of *vicárie* S.T. 589/22 [l. 22] *vlcary*. Similarly *Antóny* beside *Antónie* (§ 94). Boccaccio's *Emília*, Hippolita's sister, appears in Chaucer as *Émelye* (on the other hand, the province of the same name retains its original accent, S.T. 404/51 [E. 51]: *Eméle*, Harl. 7334: *Emýl*, Cambr. Dd. 4.24 has emended *Eméle* to *Emélie*, cf. W. A. Wright's reprint of the Clerkes Tale. On the whole, Proper Names in *-ie* rarely shift their accent either in rime or elsewhere: *Cecille* occurs by the side of *Cecillie*, but not *Cécilye*. If the forms *Márie* and *Marie* are both in use, the former must be the native one (Orrm's *Márje*?), the latter the one borrowed from the Romance.



## DIPHTHONGS.

88 The diphthongs of **Romance origin** which occur chiefly in originally tonic syllables, but also in originally pre-tonic ones, are: *ai*, *gi*, *eu*, *au*; in exceptional cases *ou*.

89. *ai* corresponds to (a), older French *ai*, (β) older French *ei* (whence later French *oi*). The two diphthongs coalesced in Anglo-Norman in *ei*, from which, in case of monophthongisation (§ 68γ), *ē* resulted. If the diphthong was preserved, it, like native *ei*, became *ai*. In orthography the two groups (a) and (β) are only partially, and by no means consistently, differentiated. Examples:

(a) *jay*, *lay* 'song,' *paye*; *air*, *debonaire*, *repaire*; *paleys*, *eyse* (beside *ese*); *maister*; *capitayn*, *chapeleyn*, *soverayn*, *certayn* *certeyn*, *playne* N., *playn* *pleyn* adj. and adv., *vayn* *veyn* adj., *soveraynetee*, *mayntene*.

(β) *fey* 'faith,' *lay* 'law,' *despeir*, *heir*, *faire* 'market'; *deys*, *burgeys*, *harneys* *harnays*, *palfreys*, *curteis*, *preyse* V. (but, on the contrary, the noun *prys*; the diphthong *ei* = *ē* + *i* is specially characteristic for the Eastern group of French dialects); *Beneit* from *Beneeit*, *streit*; *aperceyve*, *deceyve*, *receyve*; *chamberleyn*, *desdeyn*, *peyne* *payne*, *veyne*, *Maudeleyne*, *peyne* V.; *feynte* V.; *peynte* V.; in a pre-tonic syllable, for instance, in *deyntee*; in a medial position, which always remains unaccented, *ei* alternates in M.E. with *e*: *curteisye* *curtesye*, *coveityse* *covetyse*.

*ai* is rare in *-aire* for the older and Anglo-Norman *-arie*: *vicaire* (by the side of *vicary*). As a rule M.E. has preserved the older form. The diphthong



*ai* corresponds further to: (γ) O.Fr. accented *a* before palatal *l* or *n*, (δ) O.Fr. accented *e* in the same position; when final in the tonic syllable, palatal *l* always becomes M.E. *il*, palatal *n* M.E. *in*. It is not always easy (especially in the case of the verb) to distinguish these secondary diphthongs from the original ones, cf., for instance, *pleyne compleyne*; *feyne, distreyne, restreyne restrayne*. Clear examples of the secondary diphthongs are:

(γ) *bataille, faille, Itaille, maille, taille, vitaille, assaille* V.; *montaigne montayne monteyne, Britayne Briteyne, Spayne*.

(δ) *conseil, merveyle, consaille* V., *deigne deyne* V.

(ε) In *obeye, obeysaunt, obeysaunce* the diphthong is the result of synæresis.

NOTE. Forms like *deceit, receit* have developed from *decet, recet* by assimilation to *deceyve, receyve*. On *queynte* cf. § 90. Note the following Proper Names: *Eleyne* (O.Fr. *Eleine*, in spite of the original *el*), *Criseyde* (in Boccaccio *Griseida*, in older prints: *Cryseida*),

90. *qi* corresponds to:

(α) O.F. *qi* = Lat. *au* + *i*; *joye, noise* (if Diez derives this word correctly from *nausea*), *cloistre*.

(β) O.Fr. *qi* from older *oi* = Lat. *ō* + *i*: *vois, Troye*.

(γ) O.Fr. *qi* from older *oi ui* = Lat. *ū* + *i*: *destroye, crois, boyste, anoint, point*. In French, *oi ui* further results either in *qi* or in *üi*. Anglo-Norman seems to have been partial to the diphthong *ui*, but in later M.E. it yielded in almost every case to *qi*. But in *anguisse*, or, as Chaucer probably spelt, *angwisssh*, the first element of the diphthong has become a consonant.



(δ) O.Fr. *qi* = Lat. *δ* + *i*. In French, *q* has here become a diphthong, and the resulting *uei* has further developed into *ui*. In Chaucer, *qi* occurs almost always, at least in originally tonic syllables: *annoye, oile, oystre*. But, oddly enough, *queynte* from O.Fr. *cointe*, which on the continent does not seem to undergo the development into *cueinte cuinte*, and apparently derives from Lat. *cōgnitus*, hence from *δ* + *i*. In a pre-tonic syllable: *noysance*.

(ε) O.Fr. accented *q* or *o u* before palatal *l* or *n*: *boille, broille*; *Coloigne, Boloigne*.

(ζ) Occasionally O.Fr. *qi* from older *ei* (on the normal Anglo-Norman and M.E. development of which cf. § 89): *coy*, and hence the verb *coye, Loy (Eloi)*; in a pre-tonic syllable: *roial roialtee*.

(η) O. Fr. *oi* (*ouï*) in *rejoyce*.

91. *eu* corresponds to O.Fr. *eu* from older *ou* in *corfew, newew*, in a pre-tonic syllable *eau* in *bewte*, or, as Chaucer probably spelt, *beaute*. By contraction of *e* + *au* the same sound originated in *lewte leaute*, cf. further *Jewes*, more rarely *Jues* (O.Fr. *Judeus Juis*).

92. *au* corresponds to O.Fr. *au* in loan-words: *cause, clause, laude, auditour*; O.Fr. *a* + protected *l*: *sauce, sauf, auter*; O.Fr. *a* + vocalised *v*: *aunter* (*per aunter* beside *per aventure*); O.Fr. *a* + *o u*: *brawn*.

93. *Ou* occurs only in *poure* as intermediate form between *ppure* (O.Fr. *ppure*) and *poore*; only the latter form occurs in rime.

NOTE. The triphthong *ieu* occurs in *Dieu* which is, however, only used in French phrases: *depardieux* (for *de par Dieu*) S.T. 130/39 [B. 39], where some MSS. read *depardeux*. More distinctively English is *pardȝ*, O.E. *par De* (*De* from *Deu*).



## LATIN VOWELS.

94. With regard to **Latin or Græco-Latin vowels**, in so far as they have not been referred to incidentally in the course of the discussion on Romance vowels, note the following: The vowels in unaccented syllables, as well as those in position, are considered short; accented vowels when final in the penultimate are considered long—corresponding thus frequently, though not invariably, to the original quantity (*mater, significavit, amor; redemptoris; juris*), whilst in the ante-penultimate (*benedicite, Ypólita*) the usage seems to have been variable.

Under the secondary stress final vowels are pronounced long: *omnia, principiō, benedicite*; at any rate, they rime with distinctly long vowels, and *e* and *o* are closed sounds. The same applies to Proper Names like *Valeriā, Ypolitā; Scitherō Citherō* (= *Cicero*); *Isiphileē* (= *Hypsipyle*). In the terminations *-as, -es, -os* these vowels may be designated variable (in *es* and *os* perhaps long), and *e* and *o* are open sounds: *cupiditas, Sathanas; Alcibiades, Diogenes, Ethiocles, Ercules, Socrates*, likewise, in spite of the originally short *e*: *Amadrides* (= *Hamadryades*), *Pierides; Eneydos, Metamorphoseos*. The ending *-us* generally has short *u*: *Apius, Claudius, Julius, Valerius*; but the vowel may be lengthened for the sake of rime: S.T. 367/1140 [D. 1140] *Kaukasous* (: *hous*).

If in Proper Names, under the influence of French accentuation, the final syllable of a Latin paroxyton acquires the primary, or at least the secondary, stress, the rules given above hold good as regards both the quantity and the quality of the vowels.



Words like *Cleó* (= *Clio*), *Ekkó*, *Erró* (= *Hero*), *Junó*, *Plató*, *Ápollò*, have closed  $\bar{o}$ ; *Tesbée* has closed  $\bar{e}$ , similarly, with loss of *s*: *Achatē* (: *he*, Fame 226); on the other hand, *Achatēs*, *Achillēs*, *Anchisēs*, *Polimytēs* (= *Polynices*) have the  $\bar{e}$ -sound, and *Circēs* acquires it in consequence of the epithetic *s*. In *Thebes*, Troil. v. 1486, a weak French *e* is exceptionally treated like Lat. *e* in *es*. Words like *Vulcanus*, *Venus* are pronounced with *u*, not *ü*.

The diphthong *eu* of the Grk. ending *-eus* is resolved into *e-u*: *Théseus*, *Égeus*, *Týdeus*, etc.

The various corruptions to which classical Proper Names are subject cannot be discussed in detail here. It may, however, be added that beside the fuller form of such names there appears not infrequently an abbreviated one with weak *e* in the final syllable: *Áchillēs* and *Achille*; *Cleopátarās* and *Cleopátre*; *Antónius*, *Ántonie*, *Ántony*; *Istphilée* and *Isiphille*; *Críseydā* (Troil. I. 169) and commonly *Críseyde*.

For further details cf. §§ 229 and 294.

## II. THE CONSONANTS.

95. We shall treat first of the Labials, next of the Linguals, finally of the Palatals and Gutturals. The sounds belonging to each series will be discussed in the following order: Explosives, spirants, liquids or resonants respectively.

96. The lengthening of consonants must be considered in the first place. On the whole, O.E. long consonants remain long in M.E. Isolated excep-



tions, the result of analogy, will be considered below. As a general exception founded on phonetic laws, note the case of a long consonant when final in a syllable which is unaccented in Chaucer. In *góssib*, for instance, we must assume short *b*. But in M.E., as already in O.E., a long final consonant, or a long medial consonant before consonants, was often indicated by a simple symbol. In the better Chaucer MSS. this is practically the rule: *alle* but *al*; *mannes* but *man*; *hadde* but *had*; *setten* but *set*.

NOTE. In some M.E. texts a different usage prevails, and the length of the consonant, even when final, is marked more or less consistently. Orm, who is distinguished by the consistency of his spelling, will be referred to below.

97. Already in the O.E. period the rule obtained that an originally short consonant, when final in an accented syllable, was lengthened. A great number of the phenomena which in ordinary linguistic usage are summed up in the term 'position,' are due to the operation of this law. Thus many originally short vowels became long, many originally long syllables excessively long (as, for instance, the first syllable in *wīȝ-dōm*, *clāpmonn*), an excess from which, in course of time, the language endeavoured to rid itself by shortening the vowel (wherefore M.E. *wīȝdom*, *chāpman*). In O.E., as has already been noted, this lengthening was restricted to the final consonant of an accented syllable. Nor does it seem to have taken place when the end of the syllable coincided with the end of the word; only the more compact structure and more rhetorical tone of metrical speech could in this case produce lengthening. For which reason, monosyllables ending in a



short consonant in O.E. can only be considered long when under the metrical ictus.

In the M.E. period, however, sentence stress had the intensity of metrical stress, for which reason all final short consonants after an accented short vowel were lengthened. Since final accented vowels had been lengthened already in the O.E. period, all accented monosyllables were now long. *God* became phonetically *Godd*, *ship* (O.E. *scip*) became *shipp*, *shal* (O.E. *sceal*) became *shall*, though scribes who had been in the habit of marking original length by the simple symbol, naturally adopt no special means of indicating the new length. But that this consonant-lengthening really took place is proved (1) by the fact that forms like *Godd*, *shipp*, which gradually took the place of *Godes*, *shipes*, and are the usual ones in the 14th century, can only be explained by analogy with *Godd*, *shipp*; cf., for instance, with *shipp* the suffix *-shipe*; (2) by rimes like *smal*: *al*, as well as by the N.E. change of *a* to *ō* in *small*, just as in *all*, *fall*, etc. But if *shal*, *shall* has developed on other lines than *smal*, *small*, this is due to the fact that the unaccented form of the auxiliary determined its sound (whereas the accented form, or the analogy of the other words in *-l* *-ll*, decided the N.E. orthography). When, in M.E., *shal* occurs in rime it is, of course, accented, just like the French suffix *-al* (*animal*, *celestial*), which in M.E. also rimes on *-all*, but in N.E. has completely lost its tone. The frequent use of the auxiliary *shal* as an unaccented syllable has produced such curious abbreviations as *I'se* = *I shal* (as late as Shakespeare).

It cannot be definitely decided when this con-



sonant-lengthening took place. But it seems evident that it began before the lengthening of short accented vowels in an open syllable, and that when Orrm wrote it was already an accomplished fact. Orrm, as is well known, follows the principle of representing the consonantal termination of a syllable containing a short vowel by a double symbol, and it will now be apparent why in § 6, Note 1, his system was called an appropriate one. It is imperfect, indeed, in so far as it treats unaccented syllables in exactly the same way as accented ones. Nor is it always quite to the point when the first of several final consonants following upon a short vowel is also doubled.

98. Let us now turn to the consideration of the consonants occurring in Chaucer. With regard to their sources we shall, as a rule, discuss only those of O.E. and O.Fr. origin; those of other origin will be commented upon only incidentally.

#### LABIAL SERIES.

##### 99. The tenuis *p* corresponds to:

(a) O.E. *p*: *pleyen*, *plough*, *pound* (old loan-word, Lat. *pondo*); *ape*, *lepen*, *weepen*, *gospel*; geminated, for instance, in *lappe*, *cappe*. Likewise to the *p* of other Germanic dialects: *poupen* (Mlg.); *clappe* (Mdu.).

(β) O.Fr. *p*: *payen*, *pees*; *April*; *appere*.

(γ) In exceptional cases O.Fr. *b*: *purs* [late O.E. *purs* E. ST. xxi. 334].

(δ) O.Fr. *ph f* in *sphere* (= *sphere*).

(ε) *p* is often inserted between *m* and *n*: *autumpne*, *solempne*, *sompnour*, as well as between *m* and *t*: *tempten*, *temptour*.



**100. The media *b* corresponds to :**

(α) O.E. *b* which occurs chiefly initially ; medially and finally only geminated, or in the combination *mb* : *bale*, *beere*, *beren*, *byten*, *boor* 'boar' ; *boure*, *but*, *blowen*, *broother* ; *webbe* (O.E. *webba*), *abbot* (O.E. *abbot*, older *abbod*, Lat. loan-word) *gossib* ; *clymben*, *Northumberland*, *comb*. Also to the *b* of other Germanic dialects : *boone* (O.N. *bón*), *beer* (Lg. *büre*), etc.

(β) O.Fr. *b* : *bacheleer*, *beautee* ; *habyt*, *humble*, *nombre*, *remembren*.

(γ) *b* is inserted after *m* in *thombe* (O.E. *þúma*), *slomber*.

NOTE. O.E. medial *bb* has disappeared from the verbal inflexion, owing to analogy : cf., for instance, O.E. *habban*—(*ic*) *hæbbe* (North. *hafu*), *hæfst hæfast*, *hæft hæfað*, pl. *habbað* with the Chaucerian forms : *have(n) han*, *have*, *hast*, *hath*, pl. *have* etc. Hence *heven* (O.E. *hebban*) etc.

**101. The voiceless spirant *f* corresponds to :**

(α) O.E. *f* when initial, when medial before voiceless consonants, and when final : *father*, *fast*, *fer*, *fyr*, *fox*, *fleen*, *freend* ; *rafte*, *lafte*, *lofte*, *twelfth* ; *leef*, *lyf*, *wyf*, *roof*, *elf* 'elf', *self*. Exceptionally *ʃ* occurs before a vowel as in *halfe* ; Harl. more frequently has *f* for *v* in such cases : *wyfes* etc., doubtless contrary to Chaucer's linguistic usage.

(β) O.E. *þ* by assimilation in *chaffare* (for *chapfare*).

(γ) O.Fr. *f* : *fals*, *faire* 'market', *fel*, *fume*, *flame*, *Fraunce* ; *palfrey*, *cofre* ; *cheef*, *actif*, *jolif*. In learned words *ph* is preferred : *phisik*, *philosophie*.

**102. The voiced spirant *v* corresponds to :**

(α) Initially, very rarely O.E. *f*—under Kentish



influence—*vane*, *vixen*, *veeze*, but regularly when medial between vowels and voiced elements: *knave*, *heven*, *seven*, *seven*, *driven*, *liven*, *lyve* Dat. of *lyf*, *wyves* from *wyf*, *love*, *dove*, *twelve*, *silver*; finally, only in the unaccented particle *of* (where, however, the spelling is *f*), as already in O.E. (but cf. the archaic form *ob*), and still in N.E.

(β) O.Fr. *v* initially and medially: *vayn*, *veyne*, *verray*; *meeve*, *greeve*, *keevre*.

The consonant has been dropped medially, for instance, in *lord* (*loverd*, O.E. *hlāford*); *lady* (*lavedy*, O.E. *hlāfdige*), in *heed* beside *heved*; it has been assimilated to following *m* in *womman* *woman* (from *wimman* (O.E. *wifmon*)).

### 103. The semi-vowel *w* corresponds to:

(a) O.E. *w* initially, as well as after a preceding consonant: *water*, *was*, *wex*, *werk*, *wys*, *wolf*; *sweete*, *swerd*, *two*; *widwe*, *falwe*, *arwe*. Of O.E. initial consonant groups the first element of which is *w*, *wr* is fairly extensively preserved: *wryten*, *wrecche*, *wrooth*, etc.; *wl* is retained probably only in *wlatsom*, other words in which it occurred are no longer in use in Chaucer. *Wh* is a new formation from *hw* (cf. § 122a): *who*, *what*, *why* etc. The combination *kw* (O.E. *cw*) is represented by *qu* (after the model of O.Fr. *qu* = Lat. *qu*): *queene*, *querne*, *quenchen*, *quoth quod* etc. Before an *o*-vowel *w* has dropped in *so*, in *soote* by the side of *swoote*; it is uncertain whether Chaucer uses the form *swich* by the side of *such*, in which *w* has become vocalised, and has coalesced with *i*. Medially, and finally after vowels, *w* has without exception been vocalised and has united



with the preceding vowel to form a diphthong: *straw*, *trewe*, *soule*, *growen*; cf. §§ 43, 44, 46.

(β) O.E. guttural *ɣ* medially after consonants (finally only in so far as the final consonant becomes medial in M.E.): *halwes*, *galwes*, *folwen*, *morwe*, *sorwe* (O.E. *sorɣ*, oblique cases *sorɣe*). If *w* remains final, it changes to the voiceless spirant *f*, cf. *dwerf* (N.E. *dwarf*), which, apparently, does not occur in Chaucer. *Borw* also occurs by the side of *borugh*. Medial and final *w* from guttural *ɣ* after vowels, like original *w* in this position, has, without exception, become *u*; cf. §§ 33, 44, 46.

(γ) Anglo-Norman *w* from Germanic *w*: *warante* V., *wardeyn*, *wastel* (-breed), *werre were*, *werreye*, *William*. In *wasten* (O.Fr. *waster*, *gaster*) we may have a blending of Lat. *vastare* and a presumptive Ohg. *wastjan* (Diez, Wörterbuch,<sup>4</sup> p. 178 f.).

(δ) O.Fr. *u* in the combination *qu* = Lat. *qu*, as well as *u* after *c* (= *k*) and *g*: *quart*, *querele*, *enquere*, *quyten*; *queynte*, *angwissh* (§ 90).

NOTE. Aphæresis of *w* occurs in *was were*, *woot wiste*, *wil wolde*, preceded by *ne*: *nas* beside *ne was* etc.

#### 104. The resonant *m* corresponds to:

(α) O.E. *m*: *man*, *might*, *mooten*; *smyten*; *name*, *deemen*, *comen*, *hoom*; *clymben*, *comb*; long *m*, for instance, in *swimmen*, *swam*; *wem*, *wemmeles*. Final *m*, in an originally inflexional syllable, is preserved only in *whilom*. *Fro* occurs by the side of *from*, the latter before initial vowels and *h*, the former before consonants.

(β). O.Fr. *m* which occurs initially, as well as medially, before vowels and before labials: *magestee*,



*mateere, meynee, mesure, mytre, montaigne; amiable, clayme, memorie, charme; champartie, emperour, embrace, compaignye.* Under Latin influence *m* stands, instead of *n*, in *circumstaunce*.

## LINGUAL SERIES.

105. The tenuis *t* corresponds to :

(α) O.E. *t*: *tale, teechen, tellen, tyme, timber, tooth, toun, tonne; tree, treden; meeten, smyten, hooten; myghte, moste; it, that, what, sat, nyght, fist.* O.E. gemination, for instance in *sitten, setten, metten, hat, fat* etc. The assimilation is old in *yset* (O.E. *jeseted, jreset*), whilst in other cases it did not take place in the uninflected form of the Participle until the M.E. period. It is old also in the syncopated form of the 3rd Pers. Sing. Pres. Ind. of verbs the root of which ends in *d* or *t*: *bit = bitteth* or *bldeth, writ = writheth, fint = findeth*, etc. (cf. § 186). *t* occurs also in words borrowed from other Germanic dialects: *taken* (O.N. *taka*), etc.

(β) O.E. *þ* (*ð*) after some other preceding spirant: *theftē, highte, rist = ryseth* (in this case already O.E. *rlsð, rlst*); also O.N. *ð* in *sleighte, slighte*. Further, *th* (= O.E. *þ*) becomes *t* in *atte = at the, saistow, woostow*, etc.

(γ) O.E. *d* in the syncopated forms of the weak Preterite (which in M.E. also determine the form of the P.P.), in *-nde* (*-nd + de*, but also *-n + de*) *-lde* (*-ld + de*), *-rde* (*-rd + de*); *blente, sente; lente; bilte; girtē*. Rarely, in other cases, O.E. *d*: *bretful* (O.E. *breord-*), *abbot* (O.E. *abbod*, but also in later O.E. *abbot*).



(δ) O.Fr. *t*: *temple, tempest, tour*; *bataille, mayntene, assenten*; *estaat, despyt*: *best* etc. *Th* in *Thomas*.

(ε) *t* is added to final *s* in *heeste, biheeste* (O.E. *behæts*).

**106. The media *d* corresponds to :**

(α) O.E. *d*: *deed, deaf, doom, dreem*; *syde, hider, thider, weder, leeden, fader, mooder, wode, togidre*; *leed, heved heed, mood*.

Long *d*, for instance, in *ladde* (O.E. *lædde*), *spradde* (O.E. *sprædde*), *lad, sprad, bad* Adj. (O.E. *bæded* P.P. cf. Engl. Stud. vi. 91), *madden* (from *mad, amad* O.E. *amæded*); *bladder* (O.E. *blædre blæddre*), (*n*)*adder* (O.E. *nædre*); *hadde* (O.E. *hæfde*), *had* (O.E. *hæfd*).

(β) Sometimes O.E. *ð*: *coude* beside *couthe, quod* beside *quoth, mordre, burden*.

(γ) O.Fr. *d* initially and medially: *dame, deys, digne, druerye*; *auditour, panade, amenden, extenden, tendre*; *proude pryde*, late O.E. *prūd prýda*?

(δ) *d* is inserted between *n* or *l* and *r*: *thonder, alder*. In O.Fr. words a *d* of this kind, as, for instance, in *tendre*, was transmitted by O.Fr. to M.E.

NOTE. *d* has sometimes become assimilated to a following *s*, as in *gossib, gospel, answeve* (from O.E. *godsibb, godspell, andswerian*).

**107. The interdental spirant *þ* or *ð*.** The former symbol may stand for the voiceless, the latter for the voiced sound, though the O.E. usage, especially with regard to the second symbol, by no means observes the distinction. The Chaucer MSS. sometimes employ *þ*, sometimes *th*. It is hard to discover



what symbol the poet himself may have used. In accordance with the best MSS. of the Canterbury Tales we use *th*. The sound corresponds to :

(α) In the majority of cases O.E. *þ* or *ð*. It is voiceless initially and finally: *thanken*, *thenken*, *thinken*, *thries*; *bath*, *breeth*, *deeth*, with the probable exception of the unaccented particle *with* before words with an initial vowel, and the verb *quoth* in combinations like *quoth I*, *quoth he*; hence *quod*. On the other hand, contrary to the N.E. usage, the *th* is probably voiceless in *thou thee thyn*, *the*, *this*, *that*, *thus*, *than* etc., since Orrm even after a final (lingual) media changes the *th* in such words into *t* (cf. *forþedd te þin wille*), and the form *atte* = *at the*, which is common in Chaucer also, seems to presuppose voiceless *t*. The spirant is voiced medially between vowels: *bathen*, *seethen*, *fithelē*, *clothen*, *soothe*, as well as between *r* and a vowel: *worthy*, or between *r* and *r*; this also accounts for *d* (instead of *th*) in *burden*, *mordre*. The sound corresponds to the *þ*, *ð* of another Germanic dialect in *they* (O.N. *þeir*), *bothe* (O.N. *báðer báða báðar*), *though* (O.N. *þó*). In *birthe* (O.E. *þebyrd*) we may perhaps trace the influence of O.N. *burð*.

(β) Rarely Anglo-Norman *th* as symbol for an evanescent *d*; *feyth fayth*, by the side of which, though rather as a foreign loan-word, *fey* is used.

**108. The spirant *s* also occurs as a voiceless and a voiced sound.** The two cases will be considered separately.

**109. Voiceless *s* corresponds to :**

(α) O.E. *s* initially and finally, as well as medially



when followed or preceded by a voiceless consonant : see N. ; seen V., *senden*, *sond* 'sand,' *sonde* 'messenger,' *strond* ; *glas*, *gras*, *wys*, *goos*, *hous*, *mous*, *hors* ; *wiste*, *asken*. *s* is always voiceless in *x* (phonetically = *ks*), not only when final : *wex*, *flex*, *six*, but also medially : *waxen*. With regard to final *-s*, note that *s* in *is* and *was*, as proved by rimes, is voiceless, as is also the inflexional *-s* after voiced elements, even after long vowels ; cf. S.T. 471/2276 [E2276] *auctoritees* : *gees*. That the N.E. usage is of later origin is proved by petrified case-forms like *twice*, *thrice* = M.E. *twyes*, *thryes* (cf. the forms *hence*, *thence*, M.E. *hennes*, *thennes*, which are probably to be explained in a similar manner ; on the other hand, however, with voiced *s*, *else* = M.E. *elles*). M.E. *as* from *ase*, *alse*, *also* may contain voiced *s*. The final *s* in *his* seems doubtful.

*ss* is always voiceless, whether it be the result of old gemination, or of assimilation (but not when it is merely the lengthening of final *s* in an accented syllable) : *lesse*, *lasse*, *blisse* *blis*, *lis*, *kissen*, *missen*, *blessen* (O.E. *blétsian*) ; *gossib* (O.E. *godsibb*), § 106 N.

(β) O.Fr. initial and final *s* : see 'seat,' *serve*, *sire*, *sovereign*, *suffisaunce*, *space*, *stable* ; *paas*, *avys*, *prys*, *pees* etc. Medial *s* is voiceless before voiceless consonants : *maistrye*, *meschaunce*, as a rule, also after consonants in general : *counsail*, *falsifye*.

A short voiceless *s* is also recognisable in O.Fr. *ss* which, in words like *laisser*, corresponds to original *s* after *k* (*x* = *ks* > *is*).

A form like *creissent* (*cs* for *sc*) seems to admit of similar explanation, also *graisse*, the origin of which is obscure. The shortness and voicelessness of the



consonant (as well as the length of the *ʃ* which has resulted from the diphthong) are preserved in M.E. Chaucer seems generally to spell these words with *ss* (the MSS. now and again with *s*), perhaps occasionally with *c*: *gresse*, *encresse* (*increce*), *relesse*; in a normalised orthography *c* would be preferable.

O.Fr. *ss* = Lat. *ss* must be considered a long voiceless *s*, for instance, in *passer*, *cesser*. In Chaucer the consonant is frequently shortened; regularly when it ceases to be medial and becomes final, as in *prees* by the side of *presse*, *ciprees*; but also occasionally under other circumstances: *pace* more frequently than *passee*, *cesse*, with variable quantity of the *s* (and hence also of the *ʃ*), on the other hand, *presse* with long *s*.

(γ) O.Fr. *c* = Lat. *c* before *e* and *i*; or Lat. *ce ci*, *te ti* before another vowel. The development of this sound in French up to the 12th century may be illustrated as follows: (*ky*), *ty*, *tʃ* (= Ital. *c* before *i*, *e*) *ts*, in which connection note that the Picard dialect, which prevailed also in part of Norman territory, remained at the *tʃ*-stage, when the other dialects had already attained the *ts*-stage. Interesting for us at the moment is only the Common French *ts*, which predominated also in older Anglo-Norman. Now in England, as on the continent, the explosive in the O.Fr. affricate *ts* became assimilated to the spirant, the result being *ss*. When this change took place the symbol was still exclusively *c*. In some cases the consonant was shortened at once, namely initially and medially after a preceding consonant (not until later, and not so regularly, after unaccented vowels), further in learned words: *vice*, *avarice*.



French orthography has, as a rule, retained the original symbol *c* for this short *s*-sound; but, in course of time, the symbol *s*, as well as the *c* or *ç*-symbol, was used between a consonant and a dark vowel. After vowels, especially after accented vowels, *ss*, which resulted from *ts*, preserved its length more effectually, and here the graphic symbol *ss* gradually appeared by the side of *c*, and ultimately, with but few exceptions, supplanted it (*c* occurs particularly after *a* in substantives, otherwise generally only in loan-words where the consonant is short).

In Chaucer the short *s*-sound occurs initially, as well as medially, after consonants. Initially he generally uses *c*: *celebrable*, *celle*, *celerer*, *centre*, *cerclen*, *ciprees*, *citee*, *citole*; in some cases, indeed, the MSS. vary: *seynt* beside *ceynt* 'girdle,' and occasionally it is the better MSS. which use *s*: *sencer* by the side of *censer*, *syklatoun* beside *ciclatoun*. *Sendal* (O.Fr. *cendal*), by reason of its origin, which, however, is obscure, does not belong here. Between a consonant and a light vowel he sometimes writes *c*, sometimes *s*: *mercy*, *percen*, *herse*, between a consonant and a dark vowel *s* is the rule, as in *raunsoun*.

Medially, between vowels, the long consonant is often shortened in Chaucer, not only in loan-words, but also in other cases, regularly after *a*: *grace*, *place*, *space*, *chace*, *purchase*, in learned words like *devocioun*, *condicioun*, *avarice*, *malice*, *vice*, *Grece*. In all these cases the spelling *c* prevails. *Boece*, *Lucrece*, alternate with *Boesse*, *Lucretse*. On the other hand, in the nominal suffix *-esse* always long *s* and short *e*: *noblesse*, *richesse* etc., also in the verb *dresse*.



NOTE. O.Fr. *c* (= *ts*) occurs only initially and medially; finally it is represented by *z* (*braz, laz, cerviz* etc.) which originally stood for *ts*, later *s*, and was then replaced graphically by *s* (or *x*) But in a great many cases *is* with a simple voiced spirant occurs after a preceding vowel, instead of medial *c* (for instance, *raison, saison, voisin voisin* etc.), and in the same way, instead of final *s*, -*is* (*pais, palais, pris* from *\*prieis* etc.) where the spirant is, indeed, voiceless, but must once have been voiced. We must assume the development to have been the same in both cases: *ts, dz, iz*, and, when final, *is*. Upon what conditions the softening of the *ts*-sound is dependent, cannot be very concisely stated: In the first place Lat. *c* before *e* and *i* develops on these lines, thereupon Lat. *ti* before vowels, finally Lat. *ci* before vowels; the accent exercises a certain amount of influence, nor does the quality of the preceding vowel seem a matter of indifference, cf. the noteworthy article by Horning, *Zur Gesch. des lat. C.* Halle, 1883, which did not come to my notice until I was already engaged in reading the proof-sheets of my book. I do not, however, in all respects share Horning's point of view. Some cases remain perfectly obscure, namely, those in which an *i*-sound develops out of the *ts*-sound without softening the affricate (cf. *espice*, from *\*espieice*), and those in which diphthongisation takes place in position (*pidce, nidce*), or where *dz* seems to have developed instead of *iz* (i.e. *idx* instead of *is* with voiced *s*): *croiz* i.e. *croits* from older *\*croidz*, cf. *croiser*, likewise *voiz, noiz, puis* etc. (*croiz* may, of course, be a blending of *croz* and *crois*).

(δ) Finally O.Fr. *z* = *ts*, later *s*, for instance in *laas, crois, vois*: also where it has become medial in *emperice* (O.Fr. *empereiz*). Only where an inflexional *s* was immediately added to a form in final -*t* was the sound -*ts* preserved in spelling: *servauntz, penitentz*.

(ε) On the voiceless *s*-sound in words like *accomplice, cherice*, cf. § 112 β.



**110. Voiced *s* corresponds to :**

(α) O.E. *s* medially between vowels : *amasen* (O.E. *āmasian*), *cheesen*, *risen*, *wyse* Adj. Pl., *wyse* N. ; *houses* ; the symbol is rarely *z*, as in *veeze*, S.T. 57/1985 [A. 1985] (cf. § 23, Note.) Perhaps also between vowel and voiced consonant, as in *housbond*, *wisdom*.

In the inflexion of the verb *cheesen*, voiced *s* has been restored by analogy in all cases where, in consequence of grammatical change, it had become *r* : O.E. *clōsan*, *clās*, *curon*, *coren*, in Chaucer : *cheesen*, *chēes*, *chōsen*, *chōsen*. On the other hand, P.P. *lore(n)* from *leesen*, and Pret. *were weren* from *was*.

(β) O.Fr. *s* of various origin, medially between vowels : *ese*, *apesen*, *plesen*, *sesen*, *resoun*, *sesoun*, *prisoun*, *assise*, *diocise*, *servise*, *justise*, *baptisen*, *devisen*, *excusen*, *resolve*, *resigne*, perhaps also between vowel and voiced consonant as in *desdeyn*, *disgrise* *degysel*. Before continuous sounds *s* had already in the oldest Anglo-Norman become mute or *d*, in Chaucer, for instance, in *medlee*, *ile*, *meynee*.

(γ) O.Fr. *z* initially (no example) and medially as in *duszeyne* *doseyne* *doseyn*. Also *z* in foreign Proper Names as *Zephyrus*, *Razis*. Here belongs further the mysterious form *Zanzis*, S.T. 303/16 [C. 16] (= *Zeuxis* ?), *Zauzis*, *Zanzis*, Troil. iv. 414.

**111.** The relation of the voiced to the voiceless *s* in the suffix *-ise*, *-ice*, calls for special comment. The Latin suffixes *-icia*, *-itia* regularly result in O.Fr. *-ece*, later *-esse* ; in some cases, however, they become *-ise*, and this form also occurs as the representative of Lat. *-icium*, *-itium*.

In a number of cases *-icia*, *-itia*, *-icium*, *-itium* are



represented by *-ice*. The latter suffix appears primarily in learned words, the ending *-ece*, later *-esse*, is, on the contrary, a purely popular one; the suffix *-ise* seems to occupy an intermediate position, in so far as (setting aside the other elements of the words under discussion) at least the *i* and the voiced *s* are in accordance with the rule, by which attraction of the *i* goes hand in hand with the simplification and softening of the *ts* sound; Lat. *t* + *i* ought, of course, to have resulted not in *ī*, but in *ei*. Now Chaucer employs all three suffixes, and, moreover, in accordance with the usage of older French texts. The spelling, even of the better MSS., not infrequently misrepresents his habit with regard to the endings *-ise* and *-ice*; but there is clear evidence of it in rimes. Judging by these, voiced *s* prevails in *coveitise*, *exercise*, *franchise*, *justise*, *juwise*, *juyse*, *marchandise*, *sacrifise*, *servyse*, *tormentise* (also in the name *Venyse*, which is regularly formed from *Venētia*, as *pris* from *prētium*); the voiceless sound in *avarice*, *benefice*, *malice*, *office*, *vice*, and in the name *Maurice*.

The voiced spirant regularly occurs in the verbs *despise*, *suffise* (with as much justice as in *plese*, for instance); *exercise* and *sacrifise* seem to be formed from the corresponding substantives; but upon the verb *sacrifise*, as upon *chastise*, for *sacrifye*, *chastye*, the analogy of verbs like *baptise* etc. may have exercised an influence.

On the voiceless *s* in the verbs *accomplice*, *cherice*, *warice*, as well in the subst. *nyce*, cf. § 112 β. The sound is not accounted for in the verb *trice* (O.Fr. *tricher*).



**112. The voiceless spirant  $\text{ʃ}$** , the sound of which is equivalent to N.E. *sh*, is spelt *sch* or *sh* in native words; we prefer the latter spelling, as being that of the most accurate and consistent MSS. In French words either the same symbol is used, or the traditional one *ss* based upon French usage. The sound corresponds to:

(a) O.E. *sc*: *shaken, shame, shapen, sheeld, sheep, ship, short, shour, shrive*. Medially and finally  $\text{ʃ}$  is always lengthened, since when the originally compound sound was simplified the original duration was preserved; the long sound is always represented by *sch* (or *ssch*): *asshen, wasshen, thresshen*; *assh, flessch, fissh*. There is, of course, no lengthening when the sound is initial in the second part of a compound, as in *felaweshipe*. On the combination *sk* in Chaucer, cf. § 119.

(β) O.Fr. *ss* = Lat. *sc* before *e, i* or *sci, sti* before a vowel. We must here assume the phonetic development to have been (*sky*), *sty*, *stʃ*, *sʃ*, wherefrom results lengthened, or possibly also short,  $\text{ʃ}$ . This sound which is still extant in Italian (to take one example among many, *angoscia*) must have existed also in O.Fr., and be frequently concealed under the symbol *ss*, to what extent, and with what chronological or dialectal limitations, let Romance philologists decide. At any rate, the sound penetrated into English, and has maintained itself there up to the present day, whilst the orthography, starting from *ss*, by degrees appropriated to itself the symbol *sch, sh* which stood for the identical sound in native words. In M.E. this  $\text{ʃ}$ -sound is always long, and occurs only medially and finally. The verbs of the *i*-class with an in-



choative Present are chiefly in question where forms like *-iscis*, *-iscit*, *-iscimus*, *-iscitis* seem to have determined the character of the preceding consonant: *blaundissen blaundisshen*, *florisshen*, *norissen*, *punissshen*; in *esco*: *vanissshen*; analogous formation *venquissshen*. Also *angwissh* (O.Fr. *anguisse angoisse*, Lat. *angustia*); in *parisssh* the origin of the sound is obscure.

Some at least of the verbs in *-isco* appear in Chaucer also with short voiceless *s*, in which form he employs them chiefly in rime; thus there occur in the C.T. *accomplice*, *cherice*, *warice* (O.Fr. *garir*, *warir*) riming with *office*, *vice*, *avarice* etc. It is a question whether here the younger French form of the  $j$ -sound under discussion has exercised an influence, or whether a variation in the development of the original form has taken place. The Adj. *nyce* (O.Fr. *nice*) must trace back to *\*necius* instead of *nescius*.

**113. The voiceless affricate  $tʃ$ , represented by *ch*, corresponds to:**

(a) O.E. palatal *c* (= *k*). Initially, it occurs before light vowels, amongst which must be numbered *æ* and *ea*, as a rule also *æ*, *ea*; in *y*, *ý*, on the other hand, not the *i*-, but the *u*-element seems to exercise the predominant influence. Examples: *chin*, *child*, *chiden* *cherl*, *cheese* *cheep*, *chapman* *chaf*. Before O.E. *i* (which however as the vowel-development proves, cannot, in this case, have had the *i*-sound) in *cherche*. Medially the palatalisation takes place as a rule only when O.E. *c* has transmitted the *i*-mutation of the preceding vowel: *beeck(e)*, *breech*, *leeche*, *blechen*, *seechen* *biseechen*, *techen* *bitechen*,



*drenchen*, *thenchen*, *muchel*, *muche* (O.E. *micel mycel*) etc., but, under these circumstances, *k* also occurs in some cases (§ 118 a). Rarely otherwise: *speche*, *cherche*, obscure is *wenche*. The medial gemination is treated similarly: *wicchecraft*, *wrecche*, *fecchen*, *strecchen*, thus also *recchen* 'to reck, care' (O.E. *reccan*, but also *reccan*; is the lengthening of the consonant due to the influence of *reccan*, M.E. *recchen* 'stretch'?), by the side of *rekken* (§ 118 a), *lacchen*. Without softening by mutation in *wacche*. Finally *tʃ* develops, in the first instance, under much the same conditions as medially, e.g. *bench*, *wrench*; further after *t* and *i*: *dich* -*lich* (likewise -*liche*), the adj. *lich* by the side of more frequent *lik* (likewise adv. *yliche* by the side of *ylike*), *wich*, for instance, in *Greenewich*: *ich* beside more frequent *I*; finally after an *l* that has been dropped in *eech*, *which*, *swich*, *such*. *tʃ* + *j* becomes long *ʃ*: *Frenssh* from *Frencisc*.

(β) O.E. *t* + palatal *j* in *orchard* (O.E. *ort-jeard*, beside which early the form *orcjeard*).

(γ) O.Fr. *ch*: *chapel*, *char*, *chambre*, *chaunge*, *chaste*, *cheef*, *cheere*, *chivalrye*; *vache*, *broche*, *bacheleer*, *archeer*; *marchaunt*, *approchen*; *franchise*, *riche*, *richesse* etc. The main source of O.Fr. *ch* is Lat. *c* before *a*, which in Picardy and a part of Norman territory retains the *k* sound. Thus we see Picard *c* or *k* playing a part, though a subordinate one, by the side of French *ch* even in Anglo-Norman, and also in the language of Chaucer; cf. § 118 γ.

(δ) Very rarely Old Pic. *č* *ch* which corresponds to O.Fr. *c* (*tʃ* for *ts*, *s*, cf. § 109 γ). An undoubted example is *cacchen* from Old Pic. *cachier* = O.Fr. *chacier* (which resulted in *chacen*). A word like



*chiche* is of no moment, because here the Picardism is, if one may say so, Common French.

NOTE. The derivation of M.E. *cacchen* from Old Pic. *cachier* has recently been questioned, and its derivation from Common French *cacher* has been suggested instead. This assumption is untenable, because not only is there no evidence for Fr. *cacher* meaning 'to acquire by the chase,' but such a meaning is inconceivable, since the word is not derived from \**coactare*, but (cf. Gröber) from \**caveare*. An attempt to claim M.E. *cacchen* as a native word has been refuted elsewhere. Cf., however, for the Picard *ch* in English, M.E. *cherie*, N.E. *cherry*, as well as N.E. *scutcheon*.

#### 114. The voiced affricate *dʒ* occurs:

(a) In original English words only medially. It has developed from O.E. final or medial palatal media, which occurs only in the gemination (*cj*=*gg*), and in the combination *nj*, in both cases after the operation of *i*-mutation. O.E. palatal *cj* results in *ddʒ*, spelt *gg*; palatal *nj* results in *ndʒ*, spelt *ng*. Examples: *brigge*, *Cantebrigge* *Cantebregge*, *egge*, *eggen*, hence *eggement*, *wegge*, *abeggen*, *leggen*; *alenge* (O.E. *ælenje*), *sengen*.

NOTE 1. It is possible that in the verb *eggen* the medial consonant represents the phonetic value *gg* as well as the phonetic value *ddʒ* (cf. O.N. *eggja*, N.E. to *egg* by the side of 'to *edge*'); the guttural media prevails, probably exclusively, in *egging*. In *lenger*, *strenger*, *lengthe*, *strengthe* etc., *γg* must have developed for *ndʒ* as the result of analogy (as in *long*, *strong*).

NOTE 2. *Abeyen abyen*, *leyen* occur side by side with *abeggen*, *leggen*, and, moreover, more frequently. The analogy of *abeyest abyest*, *leyest*, and similar forms, where in O.E. the palatal spirant *j* stood, has been applied to forms where the palatal media was the rule. O.E. *licjan*, *secjan* seem to be represented in Chaucer exclusively by *lyen*, *seyen sayen*.



(β) It derives further from O.Fr. *j* or *g* (*e, i*). Chaucer generally writes *j* (or *i*) before *a, o, u*; before *e, i*, he uses *g*, but sometimes also—especially initially—a *j* (or *i*) which, in this case, frequently corresponds to the Latin spelling: *jay, janglen, jolyf, joye, jornee, juge, justen jousten, justice, juyse*, less appropriately *gayler*; *gentil, get, Jewerye, jupart, jelous*; *age, page, rage, magestee, juge, aungel, daunger, chaungen, chalengen*. Medially, between an accented *e* and another vowel, there is a tendency towards gemination: *collegge, abreggen, aleggen* (here influence of Engl. *aleggen*? cf. Mätzner, a.v.), occasionally also elsewhere: *juggement* beside *jugement*.

Initially, the French sound has ousted the native one in Proper Names borrowed at an early period: *Jerusalem, Jesus, John* etc. are to be pronounced with initial *dʒ*, not with *j* or *y*.

#### 115. The liquid *l* corresponds to:

(α) O.E. *l*, initially also *hl*: *lasten, leten, litel, lore, louten*; *lepen, loud*; *blowen, slouth, dale, fele, sowle, fowle, seelde, sold, half, elf*; *deel, wel, hool*. The length of the consonant is of old standing, for instance, in *halle, fallen, fellen, al alle, wal*, but recent in *smal, shal* etc., *l* remains short, however, in *smale, shule, shuln*.

NOTE. O.E. *l* is rarely dropped: *eech, which, swich*; *as* occurs beside *also*, meaning 'so'; meaning 'as' it occurs only in the form '*as*'; meaning 'also' in the form *als* beside *also*.

(β) O.Fr. *l*: *latoun, lay* 'song,' *lay*, 'law,' *lepard, lige, loos*; *blame, cleer, celereer, flame, assemblen, ensauple, palfrey*; *roial, cruel* etc. Protected French *l* has resolved itself into *u*, but often reappears in Anglo-



Norman texts (*palfrey* which is based on *palefrei*, does not belong here). In Chaucer we find protected *l*, for instance, in *fals*, *cruelte*, *roialtee*, on the other hand, *auter*, *beaute*, *beaute*, *maugre*, *reme*, *sauf*, *saven*, *sautrie* etc. *l* naturally stands in learned words like *salvacioun*, *salpetre*.

French palatal *l*, when final in the originally tonic syllable, becomes *il*, or, before a vowel, generally *-ill*: *bataille*, *faille*, *Itaille*, *assaille* V., *consaille* V., *merveyle*, *conseyl*, *peril*; in the pre-tonic syllable it becomes *-lly*, as in *William*.

(γ) *l* is inserted in *manciple*, *sillable*, *cardiacle* etc.

#### 116. The trill *r* corresponds to :

(α) O.E. *r*, initially also *hr*: *reden*, *riden*, *rood*, *rough*; *roof*; *breest*, *dreed*, *freend*, *writen*, *steeren*, *lore*, *dore*, *lord*, *word*, *short*, *erthe*, *kerven*; *heer*, *for* etc. Gemination, for instance, in *sterre*, *ferre*. O.E. *r* is dropped in *speken* [already O.Kent. *specan* = Ohg. *spēhhan* beside *sprēhhan*] or *speche*. Metathesis has taken place, for instance, in *fright*, *wright*, *wroughte*. In many other cases, on the other hand, an O.E. metathesis has been abandoned: *bresten*, *thresshen* (cf. § 140) etc.

NOTE. *On* chosen for *curon*, *coren*, cf. § 110 a.

(β) O.Fr. *r*: *rage*, *roial*, *reme*, *resoun*, *braunche*; *Fraunce*, *trenche*, *houre*, *amorous*, *poure*; *archeer*, *cleer*, *flour* etc. Geminated, for instance, in *array*, *werre*; *werreye*. Simplification of the gemination takes place, for instance, in *were*, *Fynystere*, the infinitives *enquere*, *requere*. On the simplification of the geminates in O.Fr. cf. Faulde, Ueber Gemination im Altfranz., p. 10, ff. (z.f. rom. *Phil.*, vol. iv. p. 542).



**117. The resonant *n* corresponds to :**

(a) O.E. *n*, initially also *hn* : *name, neede, night, nothing ; nekke ; knave, knight, snewen, vane, seene, moone, lond, stenten ; wyn, streen, boon*. The length of the consonant is of old standing, for instance, in *synne, cynne, man mannes, can conne* etc.

When final in inflexional syllables *n* is frequently dropped : for particulars cf. the chapter on Accidence. Note further, beside *oon* the form *oo* or *o*, and beside the shortened *an* (before vowels and *h*) the form *a* (before consonants).

(β) O.Fr. *n* : *nature, necligence, nyce, noble, norice ; enemy, veyne, punisshen, amenden, repenten, count, aunt, daunger, aungel, chaunce, trenche ; playn, soun, prisoun, noun*.

Palatal *n* when final in the originally tonic syllable becomes *-in*, though the spelling sometimes, and generally after *l*, remains *gn* : *Britayne, deigne deyne* V., *Boloigne, vyne, signe, benigne, digne*. When final in the syllable immediately preceding, it becomes *ny* in *onyoun*, but we also find—and this, moreover, in the best MSS.—*oynon*. The phonetic value of *gn* in words like *signefye, magnificence* etc. is doubtful.

(γ) Lingual *n* is inserted in *papyngay, popyngay*, but the most correct MS. (Ellesmere) spells *papejay*. Note also *for the nones = for then ones* and *atte nale = at then ale*.

## PALATAL AND GUTTURAL SERIES.

**118. The tenuis *k* corresponds to :**

(a) O.E. guttural *c* (= *k*) which occurs (1) initially before consonants : *cleene, knave, knee, knyght, creopen*,



*queen(e)*; before dark vowels: *can koude, corn, cup* etc., here belong also *care* (O.E. *caru cearu*), and the majority of cases where O.E. *a, ea, or æ* stands before *l*-combinations: *calf, cold* etc. (*chalk* must be influenced by O.Fr.); as a rule before O.E. *y*: *kyng, kyn, kynde, kissen kessen* etc., in some words before *e*-sounds: *keene, keel, keepen, kerven*. As far as the orthography is concerned, *k* is the rule before *e, i, or y*, and before *n*, rarely before dark vowels: *koude, q* before *u = w* (§ 103 a), in other cases *c*. (2) Medially, as a rule when the guttural has not served to transmit the *i*-mutation: *rake, snake, maken, cheeke, breken, speken, wreken, syken, drynken, synken*, occasionally even when mutation has taken place: *shenken, thynken, thenken*, probably more frequently than *thenchen, seeken biseeken* beside *seechen biseechen*. The geminate is treated similarly, for instance, in *bukke, lokkes, nekke*, but also *thikke, rekken* by the side of *recchen* (§ 113 a) 'to reck, care.' (3) Finally under the same conditions as medially: *folk, werk, book, eek, leek, seek sik, flok, lok*; rarely before original *i*: *lik* beside *lich* (cf. § 113 a).—*k* corresponds further to the *k* of other Germanic dialects, for instance, O.N. in *casten, taken, meeke*, Mlg. in *crowke, lowke* etc.

(β) O.Fr. *c = k*: *constable, cors, coward, court, curteis, contree, coy, cure, keevren, cleer, croys*; *seculer, secree, secte*; *frank, duc*.

(γ) More rarely Old Pic. *c* (corresponding to O.Fr. *ch*, cf. § 113 γ): *cacchen, caitif, cantel, carien, caroigne, carpenteer, castel, catel* etc. In other cases it is a question of Common French *c* (for *ch*) in learned words, for instance in *caas, castigacioun, cause* etc. Common French appears to be *c* (for *ch*) in *cage, cave*



**119. The combination *sk* corresponds to :**

(α) Rarely O.E. *sc* (which, as a rule, produces *sh*): initially, almost exclusively under the influence of words of Scandinavian origin, similar in sound and meaning: *scabbe*, *skile*, *skyn*, also *Scot*. *Scatered* is obscure. Medially, the transition into *sh* is sometimes prevented by metathesis: *asken*, probably more frequently *axen*, *tusked* (from O.E. *túsc tūx*).

(β) O.N. *sk*: *scalle* *scalled*, *scathe*, *scrippe*; O.N. influence may also be apparent in *skie* (O.N. *ský*). If Chaucer uses the form *skriken* by the side of *shriken*, as the reading of the Ellesmere and Hengwrt MSS. seems to indicate, S.T. 299/4590 [B 4590], the latter must be of Low German, the former of Scandinavian origin.

(γ) Mdu. *sc* in *scrapen*. *Sclendir*, that is coupled with Mdu. *slinder*, is obscure.

(δ) The same sound in some Germanic words of obscure origin, as *skippen*, *sculle*.

(ε) O.Fr. *sc* (= *sk*): *scole* *scoleer*, *scourges*, *squir(r)el*, *squier*, *sclaundre*, *scripture*, *scriveyn*.

(ζ) Old Pic. *sc* (= *sk*): *scaffold*, *scalded*, *escapen*, *scapen*, *scarsly* etc.

**120. The media *g* corresponds to :**

(α) The O.E. initial guttural spirant from Germanic *ɣ* (South Germanic *g*) which occurs before consonants, dark vowels (sometimes before *æ*, *ae*) as well as before *y*, but before *e* and *i*-sounds almost only as the result of analogy: *glee*, *glyden*, *greene*, *gat-toothed*, *goon*, *god*, *good*, *goos* *gees*, *galwes*, *geere*, *togidre*, *gilty* *agilten*, *girdel*. O.N. *gestr* must have influenced the word *gest*, since we should otherwise expect either



*gast* (O.E. *jæst*), or *yest*, *yist* (O.E. *jest jiest jist*). *Gynnen bigynnen* might have been influenced by Mdu. or Mlg., but the analogy of *gan gonnen* suffices to account for the media.

NOTE. Medially and finally the O.E. guttural spirant has changed to *w*, which became vocalised to *u* after vowels, cf. § 103 β. The spirant has, however, remained guttural only after *a*, *o*, *u* (not after *æ*), and after consonants, when no *i*-mutation has taken place. Preceding *æ* and *i*-mutation necessitate a palatal. But one exception may be noted: In the inflexion of the second class of weak verbs a thematic palatal *j* (even when = *j*) may become guttural before a dark vowel. Cf. *harwede* (O.E. *herjode*).

(β) The O.E. guttural media, which only occurs medially and finally, either geminated (*cg*), or in the combination *ng*. I have noted only one example of the media, namely *dogge*. I do not know, for instance, whether the word *frogge* occurs in Chaucer; the combination *ng* is more frequent: *thing*, *ringen*, *singen*, *springen*, *long*, *tonge* etc. In the M.E. period the media was most probably pronounced in all these cases after the guttural resonant (hence *γg*, as nowadays in *longer*, *tongue*). The *i*-mutation excludes the guttural as a rule, and produces the palatal (on the O.E. palatal media cf. § 114 α); but in *Englissh Engeland* the guttural media occurs without a doubt. The guttural sound seems therefore—at least in the combination *ng*—to have been supported by a following *l*.

(γ) *gg* resulted further by mutual assimilation from O.E. *d + c*: *beggen* from *bedecian*.

(δ) The media corresponds further to O.N. initial *g*: *gabben*, *galle*, *gate*, for instance in *algate algates*,



also before light vowels, *gelding*, *giggles*, hence also in *gest*, *geten*, *forgeten*, whilst, on the other hand, *foryeten* preserves the O.E. palatal ; medially, or finally, O.N. *gg*, for instance in *bagge*, even when *i*-mutation has operated : *leg legges*, *egging* etc.

(ε) Mdu. *g*, *gh* : *grote*, *gessen*, *pigge*.

(ζ) Keltic *g* : *gonne*, *crag craggies*, apparently W. *ch* in *hog hogges*.

(η) The O.Fr. media *g* : *glorie*, *grace*, *graunten*, *gouvernour*, *gyden gyen*, *gyse* ; *agonye*, *agw(e)*, *angwissh* etc. Sometimes also Pic. *g* as in *gardin*.

**121. The voiceless spirant  $\chi$** , represented by *gh*, appears only medially before consonants, and, in point of fact, only before *t*. It is either palatal, or guttural, according to the nature of the preceding vowels ; before the palatal sound an *i* has developed, which, however, after a preceding *i*, is not generally represented by any symbol, before the guttural sound an *u*. The diphthongs and monophthongs which thus originate have been discussed above. The spirant generally corresponds to O.E. *h* =  $\chi$  : *light*, *nyght* ; *knyght*, *highte* (O.E. *hlehtu*), *aught*, *laughter*, *taughte*, *straughte*, *broughte*, *thoughte*, also spelt *broghte*, *thoghte* etc. Sometimes to an O.N. *g* which was certainly a spirant : *sleighte* *slighte* (O.N. *slēgd*).

Original *c* (= *k*) before *i* in *Benedight*. By analogy the sound occurs in *caughte* from *cacchen*, cf. *laughte* from *lacchen*. Although the development of the vowel naturally necessitates a weakening of the consonantal character of  $\chi$ , yet, from the uniformity in the spelling and from the rimes, we may deduce that the spirant in this position had not yet become a mere breathing. Spellings and rimes like *plit* (for



*plight*); *appetit*, S.T. 473/2335 [E 2335] are quite isolated.

NOTE. That protected *gh* only occurs before *t* is accounted for by the fact that *x=hs* probably already in O.E., but in Chaucer certainly denotes *ks*, whereas any other *h* before *s* drops in M.E., *hð* becomes *ght*, and, in some other cases, a parasitic vowel develops. On the initial combinations of *h*, cf. § 122 a. On the orthography of the *χ*-sound, note that some Chaucer MSS. have *h* for *gh*, which, however, is contrary to the usage of the best codice

**122. The breathing *h* is represented by *h* and *gh*.** The first symbol obtains where, already in O.E., or soon after the beginning of the M.E. period, a mere breathing survived, likewise as representative of Romance *h*, the latter where *χ* became *h* only in the course of the M.E. period.

(a) Initially *h* is the only symbol: (1) In English words: *hare*, *helpen*, *hyen*, *hood*, *hoom*, *hous*, *he*, *hym*, *hire*, *hit*. By the side of *hit* we find *it*. *h* obtains also in the initial combination *wh*, i.e. a voiceless *w*, from O.E. *hw* (= *χw*): *what*, *where*, *why*, *who* etc. The O.E. combinations *hl*, *hn*, *hr* have lost every trace of *h* in Chaucer: *lepen*, *nekke*, *roof*. (2) In Germ<sup>e</sup> loan-words, cf. O.N. *h* in *hap* and the verb *happen* derived therefrom, Mdu. or Mlg. or Fris. *h* in the suffix *-heed*, *-hede*, in the verb *heeten*, *biheeten* etc. (3) In Keltic words, cf. *harlot*, *hog*. (4) As smooth breathing in French words, for instance, in *herber*, *heir*, *honour*, *horrible*, *hoost*, *hostelrye*, *hour*, *humble*, *humilite*, as rough breathing in *habergeoun*, *harneys*, *haste*, *heraud*, *herbergage*, *herse*.

(β) Finally, the best MSS. write *gh*. In this position the sound corresponding to O.E. or some other



Germanic *h* (= *χ*) was, in the M.E. period, still distinctly a spirant, either palatal or guttural, under the same conditions as medial *gh*, and produced, in the former case an *i*, in the latter an *u*. But the rimes and orthographical variations prove that, in Chaucer's time, only a breathing survived: *heigh hye, seigh sy, saugh* (does the spelling 'saw' also occur in Chaucer?), *bough, plough, tough, lough, slough slow, ynough ynow*. At the end of a long syllable guttural *ɣ* became *h* in O.E., hence, for instance, the *gh* in *ynough*; but we also find *trough* (O.E. *troɣ*). Original Norse *h* occurs in *though*—O.N. *þó* from *þoh*.

### 123. The voiced palatal spirant *y* occurs:

(α) Almost exclusively at the beginning of a word. It results chiefly from O.E. palatal *ɣ*, due to two sources: (1) Germanic *ɣ* (whence South Germanic *g*) which before light vowels (but not before *y*), in exceptional cases before dark ones, becomes palatal in O.E. (2) Germanic *j* before light or dark vowels. O.E. orthography employs the *ɣ*-symbol initially before *e* and *i*, in other cases *ɣe* (before *u* sometimes *ɣu*), rarely *i*. The MSS. represent the corresponding M.E. sound either by *y* or *ɣ*. Following the most reliable MSS. of the C.T. we shall use *y*, which is also the more usual symbol. Examples are: (1) *yiven yeven, foryeten* (by the side of *forgeten* cf. 120 δ), *yelwe, yerd* 'rod,' *yerd* 'garden' (O.E. *jeard*, M.E. *jard jerd*, N.E. *yard*), *yate* 'gate,' *yaf* 'gave' etc. (2) *yif, yit, ye, yeer, yok, yong* etc. *If* occurs by the side of *yif*.

(β) Medially and finally the O.E. palatal spirant *ɣ* (on its relation to the guttural spirant, cf. § 120, Note) has, in some cases, become a vowel, in others



a semi-vowel : a vowel, namely, after vowels, so that either a diphthong or a long monophthong has resulted, but a semi-vowel after consonants, which latter case will be discussed in the following paragraph.

(γ) A voiced palatal spirant seems, however, to occur medially in a few words in Chaucer. It is in these cases represented by *gh*, and corresponds to an O.E. *h*, that has been separated by a parasitic vowel from its protecting consonant, or an *h* that had been dropped medially between vowels, but has been restored by analogy with forms where it was final, and which is now bound to appear medially as a voiced spirant (cf. O.E. *on hēazum* or *flēozan* for *flēon*): *higher*, *highe*, *neighen* 'to approach.' But the weakness of the spirantic character of this *gh* is proved, not only by spellings like *neyen*, *hyer*, *hye* (these are the usual Chaucerian forms), but above all by the fact that the MSS. sometimes employ the symbol *gh* even in cases where Chaucer certainly admitted no spirant: S.T. 13/454 [Prol. 454] *weyeden*, Harl. 7334 *weighede*; S.T. 509/1035 f. [F. 1035] Ellesmere. Hengwrt, Harl. 7334 *heighe* : *eighe* (*eyghe*), Corpus *heije* : *eyje*, Lansdowne *hihe* : *eyhe*, Cambr. Gg. 427 *hyghe* : *lye*, Petworth *hie* : *ye*, where the spelling of Petworth corresponds absolutely to Chaucer's pronunciation. Perhaps the palatal spirant in *neighebour* should also be considered voiced, although it is due to O.E. *hh* from *hj* (O.E. *nēhhebur* from *nēah-jebúr*).

124. The voiced guttural spirant which, according to the above observations, we must assume in the verb *laughen* (O.E. *hlehhan* *hlyhhan*, Angl. *hlæhhan*, Mlg. Mdu. *lachen*) is in Chaucer about to become



transformed into a **labial spirant**; hence in the MSS. the spelling *laughwen* occurs. Perhaps we ought actually to assume the pronunciation *lauwen* (or *lāwen*, from which N.E. *lāf*, spelt *laugh*). *gh* in *burghes* ought, no doubt, to be pronounced in a similar way.

**125. The palatal semi-vowel *i*, *y* corresponds to:**

(a) O.E. palatal spirant or palatal semi-vowel between consonant and vowel: *berye berie* 'berry,' *merye merie*, *berien* 'bury' (O.E. *byrjan byrjan*, where *ij* marks the palatal more clearly than simple *j*), *warien*, *tarien*. In these verbs the O.E. *j*, from which the *i* is derived, is radical. In the inflexion of weak verbs the *i*, *j* and *ij* of the Present is sometimes preserved in the first conjugation, and then carried through the whole inflexion: *herien* 'to praise,' but, on the other hand, *weren* 'to defend' and *weren* 'to wear'; in the second it has dropped entirely, as in *axen*, *loven*; but a trace of the older *lovien* has survived in the derivative *louyere* by the side of *lovere*. A final palatal spirant is the source of the *y* in *Caunterbury*, which *y* does not always retain the force of a syllable even before a following initial consonant, cf. S.T. 1/16, 22 [Prol. 16. 22]. Final *y* = O.E. *i* + *j* may be treated as a semi-vowel, if the following word begins with a vowel: *many* <sup>^</sup>*a*, *so* <sup>^</sup>*besy* *a*.

(β) Romance *i* in the unaccented ending *-ie*: *contrárie*, *glórie*, *victórie*, *tragédie*, *comédie*, *studie*. Also in verbs like *stúdien*, *contrárien*, *márien*, *cárien*. Occasionally also O.Fr. *i* in the terminations *-ial*, *-ioun*, *-ious*, on the syllabic value of which, cf. § 268.



**126. The guttural *n* corresponds to :**

(α) O.E. *n* before guttural stops : *thank, synken, bryngen, syngen, heeng, Engeland, song, long, yong, tonge* etc., naturally also in forms like *thynken, thenken* ; but not in *thenchen* etc.

(β) O.Fr. *n* before guttural stops : *frank, angwissh* etc.

(γ) It is inserted in *nightyngale* (O.E. *nihtejale*).



## CHAPTER II.

### ACCIDENCE.

#### 1. THE VERB.

**127.** We shall begin with the discussion of tense-formation, and consider, in the first instance, the characteristic forms of the strong verbs: (1) the reduplicating verbs; (2) the verbs with vowel-gradation; (3) the weak verbs. We shall then discuss the inflexion of the various tenses in the different moods. Finally, we shall consider the formation and inflexion of the anomalous verbs.

#### TENSE-FORMATION OF THE REDUPLICATING VERBS.

**128.** The **Present** and the **Past Participle** have the same root-vowel, namely:

(*a*) Germanic *a* before *ll* or *l*+cons., *nn* or *n*+cons. = O.E. *a* *ea*, *a* *o*; all other cases have a long vowel or diphthong before a simple stop or before *w*:

(*β*) Germanic *ai* = O.E. *á*;

(*γ*) West Germanic *á* before *w* = O.E. *á*;

(*δ*) West Germanic *á* before a stop = O.E. *æ* *é*;



- (ε) Germanic *au* = O.E. *éa* ;
- (ζ) Germanic *ó* = O.E. *ó* ;
- (η) Germanic *ó* mutated by *i* = O.E. *é*.

These vowels develop in M.E. according to rule, for example :

- (α) O.E. *falle fealle*, M.E. *falle*, O.E. *halde healde*, M.E. *hōlde* ;
- (β) O.E. *hāte—hōte* ;
- (γ) O.E. *blāwe—bloue*, spelt *blowe* ;
- (δ) O.E. *slāpe slēpe—slēpe sleepe* ;
- (ε) O.E. *hlēape—lēpe, hēawe—heue*, spelt *heue* ;
- (ζ) O.E. *grōwe—groue*, spelt *growe* ;
- (η) O.E. *wēpe—weepe*.

The Present of O.E. *fón* and *hón* (from \**fanhan* and \**hanhan*), with its (long) *ó*, gradually disappears in M.E., and is replaced by other forms. The P.P. develops regularly ; *fanjen fōnjen—fōngen*.

129. The (apparent) root-vowel of the **Preterite** is in O.E. *é* or *éo* ; both produce M.E. *ē*, in case of shortening *ɛ*, or, united with a following *u* from *w*, *eu* (spelt *ew*). The only archaic O.E. Preterite of importance in Chaucer is *heht* (by the side of *hét*) from *hátan*.

130. We shall now enumerate the characteristic forms of reduplicating verbs found in Chaucer, marking later forms (analogy-formations—loan-words) by ordinary type.

- |                  |                |                |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| (α) <i>falle</i> | <i>fel fil</i> | <i>fallen.</i> |
| <i>hōlde</i>     | <i>heeld</i>   | <i>hōlden.</i> |
| <i>wōlde.</i>    |                |                |
| <i>walke.</i>    |                |                |
| <i>fōnge.</i>    |                |                |



	honge	heeng.	( <i>hengen</i> )
(β)	( <i>hōte</i> )	heet heet highte	hōten.
(γ)	blowe	blew	blowen.
	knowe	knew	knownen.
	crowe	crew	crowen.
	sowe		sowen.
	throwe	threw	throwen.
(δ)	sleepe slepe	sleep.	
	lete leete	leet	leten laten.
	drede dreede.		
	rede reede.		
(ε)	lepe	leep.	
	hew		hewen.
	bete	beet	beten.
(ζ)	growe	grew	growen.
(η)	weepe	weep.	

**131. Present.** *Helde* occurs rarely by the side of *hōlde*, cf. § 35 ε. *Fongen*, instead of O.E. *fōn*, may be derived from the Mlg. *fangen*; *hongen* may be accounted for by a confusion of the strong transitive verb *hōn* with the intransitive weak *hangian*; *heng* is intransitive already in Orm, and thus also *heeng* in Chaucer. In any case an Inf. *fōn*, *hōn* by the side of a P.P. *fongen*, *hongen* could not fail to appear as an anomaly.

**132. Past Participle.** Peculiar is the form *laten* *latyn*, S.T. 125/4346 [A. 4346]. Hār. 7334 has *lete*, Cambr. Gg. *letyn*.

**133. Preterite.** The plural has the vowel of the singular. The form *honge*: (*stronge*) S.T. 69/2421 [A. 2421] can, in spite of the variant *henge*, only be treated as a Pres. Pl.



**134. Intrusion of the weak inflexion.** By the side of *sleep*, *weep*, occur *slepte*, *wepete*; *walke*, *drede*, *r(e)ede* are inflected exclusively weak; Pret. *walked*, *dradde*, *radde redde*. It is doubtful whether Chaucer uses *bette* as well as *beet*.

NOTE. Already in Old Angl. *slēpan* is inflected weak, sometimes also, in O.W.S., *slæpan* and *ondrædan*. The Pret. *rædde*, from O.E. *rædan*, is of frequent occurrence. Orm has only weak forms for the Preterite or P.P. of *slæpenn*, *drædenn*, *rædenn* and *wepenn*, and no instance whatever of *walken*.

**135.** The verb *hote* requires special comment. O.E. *hátan*, *heht hét*, *hátan* means 'voco, jubeo, promitto'; *hátte* 'voco,' and thereupon 'vocatus sum.' *Hátan*, in the sense of 'vocari' occurs only Gen. 344, where it is presumably a Saxonism, since Lg. *hétan* seems to have been used in this sense earlier than Engl. *hátan*. In M.E. *haten hōten* is used not infrequently in the sense of 'vocari,' but it may be doubted whether it occurs in Chaucer with this meaning. (S.T. 45/1557 f. [A. 1557] the six MSS. have in two consecutive lines *highte* or *hȳzte*, *hiht* etc., Harl. 7334, indeed, *hote* and *hoote*). On the other hand, the use, with Passive meaning, of the Preterites derived from *heht hét* is very common in M.E. and familiar to Chaucer. *Highte* (*heht* treated as a weak Pret.) and *heet* generally mean 'vocatus sum' in Chaucer; on the other hand, *highte bihighte* (or *bihight* strong? cf. § 193) 'he promised' and the P.P. *hight* 'promised' by analogy with it. In the same sense as *highte heet* Chaucer sometimes also uses *heet* (Blaunche 948, for *hete* : *grete*, read *heet* : *greēt*). This form may be looked upon as a confusion of *heet* with a



M.E. form *hette* which does not occur in Chaucer. How to account for the form *hette* itself seems doubtful, since O.E. *hætte*, with the force of a Preterite, does not occur at all, and with the force of a Present it occurs only once. Is *hette* formed after the model of the borrowed Present *heete*, which will be discussed below? Or is it the result of a compromise between *hét* and *hätte*?

From the Preterite *highte* 'vocatus sum' the Present *highte* 'voco' has been deduced.

The Present *heete* *biheete* (§ 25), which occurs in the sense of 'promise, vow,' is a borrowed form.

#### TENSE-FORMATION OF THE VERBS WITH VOWEL-GRADATION.

**136.** Four classes are to be distinguished, which may be characterised in the first instance by the original (Germanic) vowels of the Pres. and Pret. Sing. I. *e, i*—*a*; II. *a*—*o*; III. *i*—*ai*; IV. *eu, u*—*au*.

**137.** The **first class** contains three groups: In group A the root ends in a long consonant or a consonant group—generally a geminated or protected liquid, in group B in a single liquid, in group C in a single mute. Verbs, the root-vowel of which is followed by a single mute, but preceded by mute + liquid, fluctuate between B and C. In O.E. their inflexion is generally that of C—with the exception of the verb *brecan*; in M.E., on the other hand, they incline to B, and we shall include them in that class.

**138. Class I. Group A**, falls into two sub-divisions ( $\alpha$ ) and ( $\beta$ ); in ( $\beta$ ) the root-vowel is followed by a



geminated or protected resonant; all other cases belong to (α).

The complete gradation-series (Pres., 1st and 3rd Pers. Pret. Sing., Pret. Pl. etc. P.P.) is in O.E. for both divisions:

(α) <i>e eo (ie i y, u)</i>	<i>a ea</i>	<i>o</i>
(β) <i>i</i>	<i>a or ȝ</i>	<i>u</i>

According to strict phonetic development, the result in Chaucer's language should be:

(α) <i>ē (i, u)</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ȝ</i>
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or, by group-lengthening,

<i>ē</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ȝ</i>
(β) <i>i</i>	<i>a ȝ</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>

or, by group-lengthening,

<i>ī</i>	<i>a ȝ ā</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>ū</i>
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In (α), however, the third grade has become like the fourth, the two having been alike in (β) from the beginning; the two grades are therefore in Chaucer: (α) *ȝ* or *ā* and (β) *u* or *ū*.

NOTE. On variable *u* and its representation, as well as on the symbol for short *u* after *w*, before *mm*, *nn*, etc., cf. the chapter on Phonology.

139. We shall now enumerate the characteristic forms which occur in Chaucer:

(α) <i>swelle</i>	<i>swal</i>	<i>swollen.</i>
<i>helpe</i>	<i>halp</i>	<i>holpen.</i>
<i>yelpe</i>		
<i>delve</i>		<i>dolven.</i>
<i>yeelde</i>		<i>yōlden.</i>
<i>worthe</i>	<i>warth</i> (? cf. 192/1941 Hengwrt).	
<i>kerve</i>	<i>karf</i>	<i>korven.</i>
<i>sterve</i>	<i>starf</i>	<i>stōrven.</i>



<i>breste</i>	<i>brast</i>	<i>brōsten</i>	<i>brōsten.</i>
<i>thresshe.</i>			
<i>abreyde</i>	<i>abrayd.</i>		
<i>fighte</i>	<i>faught</i>	<i>foughten</i>	<i>foughten.</i>
(β) <i>swimme</i>	<i>swam</i>	<i>swommen</i>	<i>swommen.</i>
<i>clymbe</i>	<i>clōmb</i>	<i>clomben</i>	<i>clomben.</i>
<i>biginne</i>	<i>(bi)gan</i>	<i>(bi)gonnen</i>	<i>bigonnen.</i>
<i>blinne</i>			
<i>brenne</i>	<i>brinne.</i>		
<i>renne</i>	<i>ran</i>	<i>ronnen</i>	<i>ronnen.</i>
<i>spinne</i>			<i>sponnen.</i>
<i>winne</i>	<i>wan</i>	<i>wonnen</i>	<i>wonnen.</i>
<i>bynde</i>	<i>bōnd</i>	<i>bounden</i>	<i>bounden.</i>
<i>fynde</i>	<i>fōnd</i>	<i>founden</i>	<i>founden.</i>
<i>grynde</i>			<i>grounden.</i>
<i>wynde</i>	<i>wōnd</i>	<i>wounden</i>	<i>wounden.</i>
<i>ringe</i>	<i>rōng</i>	<i>rongen</i>	<i>rongen.</i>
<i>singe</i>	<i>sōng</i>	<i>songen</i>	<i>songen.</i>
<i>springe</i>	<i>sprōng</i>	<i>sprongen</i>	<i>sprongen.</i>
<i>stinge</i>	<i>stōng</i>	<i>stongen</i>	<i>stongen.</i>
<i>thringe</i>	<i>thrōng</i>	<i>throngen</i>	<i>throngen.</i>
<i>wringe</i>	<i>wrōng</i>	<i>wrongen</i>	<i>wrongen.</i>
<i>drinke</i>	<i>drank</i>	<i>dronken</i>	<i>dronken.</i>
<i>sinke</i>	<i>sank</i>	<i>sonken</i>	<i>sonken.</i>
<i>shrinke</i>	<i>shrank.</i>		
<i>stinke</i>	<i>stank</i>	<i>stonken</i>	<i>stonken.</i>
<i>swinke</i>			<i>swonken.</i>

140. With regard to (a), note: *yelpe*, *yeelde* correspond to the Old Angl. *jelpe*, *jelde* (O.W.S. *zielpē*, *jylpe* etc.). The *i* in *fighte* presupposes an *ie* from *eo* (O.E. *feohte*), for which there is no evidence, unless the 2nd and 3rd Pers. Sing. Pres. Ind. have determined the root-vowel for the whole of the Present (and even



for the related Subst.). *Breste, thrasshe* = O.E. *berste, bersce*; the metathesis may have been reversed under O.N. influence.—*abreyde* = O.E. *abreȝde*. The strong Pret. *abrayd* is confirmed by rime, Blaunche 192, Fame 110. As a rule, the verb is inflected weak: Pret. *abreyde*, likewise in the simple form *breyde*. The form *broyded* 31/1049 [A 1049] recalls the grade of the old strong P.P. *broȝden* (Lansdowne and Petworth: *browded* under Romance influence, cf. *embrouded* 3/89 [Prol. 89] where Corpus and Petworth have *embroyded*).

141. On (β) note: *brennan* (from O.N. *brenna*) is inflected weak whether used transitively or intransitively, which is accounted for by the fact that O.E. *beornan* (intrans. strong) and *bærnan* (trans. weak), had begun to be confounded already in older M.E., the result being the extension of the weak inflexion. *Brinnan* occurs very rarely in the Present with intransitive meaning, as S. T. 335/52 [D 52]. *Rennen* etc. must derive from O.N. *renna, rann, runnu, runnenn*; the O.E. forms are: *iernan irnan* etc., rarely, *rinnan, orn arn, urnon, urnen*.

142. Class I. Group B. The gradation series is in O.E.:

*e* (ȳ)            *æ* (a or ȝ)            *ǣ* (ō)            *o* (u);

in Chaucer:

*ē*            *a*            *ē* *e* (ō)            *ō* (u).

Characteristic forms:

*stele stal.*

*bere bar beer beȝer beeren beren bȝren bȝrn.*

*shere shȝren shȝrn.*

*tere totar totȝren tȝrn.*



<i>come</i>	<i>cam</i>	<i>coom</i>	<i>camen</i>	<i>coomen</i>	<i>comen.</i>
( <i>neme</i> )	<i>nam</i>	<i>noom</i>			<i>nomen.</i>
<i>trede</i>	<i>trad</i>				<i>troden.</i>
<i>breke</i>	<i>brak</i>				<i>broken.</i>
<i>speke</i>	<i>spak</i>		<i>speken</i>		<i>spoken.</i>
<i>wreke</i>					<i>wroken wreken.</i>

**143. Pres.** *come* P.P. *comen* = O.E. *cume, cumen* ;  
 (*neme*) *nomen* = O.E. *nime, numen*. Both verbs form  
 the Pret. Sing. in O.E. by analogy with the Plural,  
 hence with *ó* instead of *a o* : *cóm cōmon, nóm nōmon*.  
 In later W.S. *nám nāmon* also appear, but not until  
 M.E. *cam cāmen*.

**144.** By analogy with *beren* the weak verb *weren*  
 (O.E. *werian* 'to put on, wear') has formed a Pret.  
 Pl. *weren*, S.T. 84/2948 [A. 2948].

**145. Class I. Group C.** Gradation series in O.E. :

*e (i)*      *æ ea (ǣ)*      *æ*      *e (i)* ;

in Chaucer :

*ē (i)*      *a ē (ē ē)*      *e ē*      *ē (i)*.

On the resulting diphthongs, cf. the chapter on  
 Phonology.

Forms :

<i>yive</i>	<i>yaf</i>		<i>yiven.</i>
<i>weve</i>	<i>waf</i>		<i>woven.</i>
<i>ete</i>	<i>eet eet</i>	<i>eeten eten</i>	<i>eten.</i>
<i>mete</i>	<i>mat</i>		<i>meten.</i>
<i>gete</i>	<i>gat</i>		<i>geten.</i>
( <i>quethe</i> )	<i>quoeth quod.</i>		
<i>see</i>	<i>saugh, seih saygh sy</i>		<i>seyen.</i>
<i>sitte</i>	<i>sat seet seet</i>	<i>seeten seten</i>	<i>seten.</i>
<i>bidde</i>	<i>bad</i>		<i>beden.</i>
<i>lye</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>leyen</i>	<i>leyen.</i>



**146. Present.** The *i* in *yive* is the result of assimilation to the Palatal (O.E. *ȝiefe ȝife*), whereas in *gete* O.N. influence is apparent. In *see*, the final *h* of the root has dropped, as already in O.E. (*séo*). The *i* in *sitte*, *bidde* (likewise O.E. *licȝe*) is due to old *i*-mutation, the gemination to *tj*, *dj* (in *licȝe* to *ȝj*); *lye* for *ligge* (*liddȝe*) is formed by analogy.

**147. Pret. Sing.** *eet ȝet* (O.E. *æt* = Goth. *ēt*) preserves original length. On the other hand *seet seȝt*, by the side of *sat*, is by analogy with the Plural. In *quoth quod o* stands for older *a* (O.E. *cwæð*), which is not wholly accounted for by the influence of the preceding semi-vowel.

**148. Past Participle.** The *i* in *given* is to be explained as in the Present. *Woven* is an instance of transition into the second group, B. By the side of the P.P. *seyen*, the adj. *ȝeene seene* (O.E. *ȝeséne ȝesýne*) which in Chaucer is only construed with the verb *to be*.

**149. Class II.** Gradation series in O.E.:

*a*, *ea* (ɛ, ɶ)      *ó*      *ō*      *a æ*, *ea* (ɶ);

in Chaucer:

*ā*, *a* ɛ (ē ɶ)      *ō*      *ō*      *ā*, *a* ɛ (ɶ).

On the resulting diphthongs, or the monophthongisation of them, compare the chapter on Phonology.

Forms:

<i>fare</i>			<i>faren.</i>
swere	<i>swoor</i>	<i>swooren</i>	<i>sworen sworn.</i>
shape	<i>shoop</i>	<i>shoopen</i>	<i>shapen.</i>
(stape)			<i>stapen.</i>



<i>grave</i>			<i>graven.</i>
<i>shave</i>			<i>shaven.</i>
<i>heve</i>	<i>haf.</i>		
<i>drawe</i>	<i>drow</i>		<i>drawen.</i>
<i>gnawe</i>	<i>gnow.</i>		
<i>stōnde</i>	<i>stood</i>	<i>stooden</i>	<i>stōnden.</i>
<i>bake</i>			<i>baken.</i>
<i>forsake</i>	<i>forsook</i>	<i>forsooken</i>	<i>forsaken.</i>
<i>shake</i>	<i>shook</i>	<i>shooken</i>	<i>shaken.</i>
<i>take</i>	<i>took</i>	<i>tooken</i>	<i>taken.</i>
<i>wake</i>	<i>wook</i>		<i>waken.</i>
<i>laughe</i>	<i>lough</i>	<i>lowen loughen</i>	<i>laughen.</i>
<i>slee</i>	<i>slough slow</i>		<i>slawen slayn.</i>
<i>waxe were</i>	<i>weex wex wax</i>	<i>wexen</i>	<i>waxen? woxen.</i>
<i>wasshe</i>	<i>wessh</i>		<i>wasshen.</i>

**150. Present *e* for *a* in *sweren*, *heven*** is due to *i*-mutation. The semi-vowel in O.E. *swerian* *swerijan*, and the geminate in *hebban* have been levelled out by analogy. *Shapen* (instead of *sheppen* *shippen*, O.E. *scieppan* *scyppan*) may have been formed by analogy with the P.P. *shapen* (hence *sh*), from O.N. *skapa*; but perhaps derivation from O.E. *sceapian* might be suggested, since the weak P.P. *shaped* also occurs. On *laughen* cf. § 124. The long vowel in *slee* *slēen* is due to loss of *h* (O.E. *slēan* from \**sleahan*).

**151. Participle.** *ø* for *a* in *sworen* occurs already in O.E. *Slawen* traces back to O.E. *slājen*, *slayn* to *slājen*; *woxen* (like Pret. *wax*) with a Present *were* follows the analogy of Class I.

**152. Preterite.** *ou* *ow* in *slough slow*, *drow*, *gnow*, *lough* = *ū* in Chaucer. Medially, as for instance in



the Pl. *lowen loughen*, we should on phonetic grounds expect the diphthong *ou*, but, by analogy, *ū* may have prevailed in this position also.

The Prets. *haf* (for *hoof*) from *heve*, *wax* (and likewise P.P. *waxen*) from *were*, follow the analogy of Class I. The Pret. *weex* with unusual, but well-attested, preservation of the long vowel, and *wex* correspond to O.E. *wéox*, which generally takes the place of the regular *wóx* (*weaxan* has thus passed from the second gradation series into the reduplicating class). Further, M.E. *wessh* from *wasshe* seems to have been formed by analogy with *wex*. The originally weak verb *quake*, P.P. *quaked*, has formed a Pret. *quook* by analogy with *shake*. The true Pret. of *fare*—*foor*—is lost, and has been replaced by *ferde* (O.E. *férde* from *féran*).

NOTE. By the side of the strong verb *waken* *awaken* 'to awake' intrans. there is a weak verb *waken* (O.E. *wacian*) *awaken* trans. 'to awaken.' The verb *taken* is of O.N. origin.

**153. Class III.** Gradation series in O.E. *ī -ā -i -i*;  
in Ch. *i -ē -i -i*.

Forms :

<i>shyne</i>	<i>shoon.</i>		
<i>dryve</i>	<i>droof</i>		<i>driven.</i>
<i>ryve</i>	<i>roof.</i>		
<i>shryve</i>			<i>shriven.</i>
<i>thryve.</i>			
<i>byte</i>	<i>bōot</i>		<i>biten.</i>
<i>slyte.</i>			
<i>shyte</i>			<i>shiten.</i>
<i>smyte</i>	<i>smōot</i>		<i>smiten.</i>
<i>wryte</i>	<i>wroōt</i>	<i>writen</i>	<i>writen.</i>



<i>byde</i>	<i>bȳðd</i>		(a) <i>biden.</i>
<i>glyde</i>	<i>glȳðd</i>		<i>gliden.</i>
<i>ryde</i>	<i>rȳðd</i>	<i>riden</i>	<i>riden.</i>
<i>slyde.</i>			
<i>bistryde</i>	<i>bistryðd.</i>		
<i>wrythe.</i>			
<i>agryse</i>	<i>agryȳs.</i>		
<i>ryse</i>	<i>rȳȳs</i>		<i>risen.</i>
<i>wrye</i>			<i>wryen.</i>

154. *ryven* (O.N. *rifa*) has supplanted O.E. *réofan* (O.N. *rjúfa*) which belonged to Cl. IV. The verb *stryven*, borrowed from the O.Fr. (*estriver*) has conformed to the third gradation series: Pret. Sg. *stroȳf*.

155. *Ripan riopan* occurs in the Anglian dialects by the side of O.E. (W.S.) *ripan* 'to reap,' Sievers, P.B.B. ix. 277. Upon which is based the Pret. *roȳen* in Chaucer.

156. **Class IV.** Gradation series in O.E.:

*eo, u*                      *ea*                      *u*                      *o*;

in Chaucer here (as in Cl. I. A, a,) the third grade has been assimilated to the fourth, hence:

*ē, ū*                      *ē*                      *ō*                      *ō*.

On the resulting diphthongs, as well as on *ī* in *lye*, *flye*, cf. the chapter on Phonology, § 21.

Forms:

<i>creepe</i>	<i>creēp</i>	<i>croȳen</i>	<i>croȳen.</i>
<i>cleewe</i>			<i>clōȳen.</i>
<i>brewe</i>	<i>brēw.</i>		
<i>fleete.</i>			
<i>sheete</i>			<i>shōȳen.</i>
<i>beede.</i>			
<i>seethe</i>	<i>sēȳth</i>		<i>sōȳden.</i>



<i>cheese</i>	<i>cheȝs</i>	<i>chȝsen</i>	<i>chȝsen.</i>
<i>leese</i>			<i>lȝren lȝrn.</i>
<i>flye</i>	<i>fleigh</i>	<i>fley</i>	<i>flowen.</i>
<i>lye</i> 'to tel! lies.'			
<i>flee</i>	<i>fleigh</i>	<i>fley.</i>	
<i>brouke.</i>			
<i>(louke)</i>			<i>lȝken.</i>
<i>shouue</i>	<i>shoof</i>		<i>shoven.</i>

157. The grammatical change which is preserved in *sqden* from *seethe* *seȝth*, *lȝren* from *leese*, is abandoned in *chȝsen* (Pret. Pl. and P.P. O.E. *curon*, *coren*) from *cheese*.

158. Instead of *flyen* the MSS. frequently write *fleen* in the Pres. (perhaps even Chaucer himself did so, cf. *Blaunche* 178, *Fame* 1523 [Globe, *Fame* iii. 433, Note]), whereby the verbs to fly and to flee become identical in form (O.E. *flēoȝan flēah flȝon flȝen*; *flēon* (from \**flēohan*), *flēah*, *flȝon*, *flȝen*). *Beeden* has been contaminated by *bidden* (Cl. I. C.) hence *bad forbad*, instead of *bēȝd forbēȝd*.

159. Noteworthy is the anomalous inflexion of *shouue* 'shove, push' with variable *u* in the P.P. (already in Lay. *scufen*), and *ō* in the Pret. Sing.

160. Weak inflexion has intruded into *cleeve*, Pret. *clefte*; *leese*, Pret. *lȝste*, also P.P. *lȝst* by the side of *lȝren*; *creepe*, Pret. *crepte* beside *creȝp*; *flee* 'flee,' *fledde*, by the side of *fleigh*.

#### TENSE FORMATION OF THE WEAK VERBS.

161. **CL. I. (A) with short root-vowel.** Present. O.E. *erie*, *derie*, *herie*, *werie*, *styrie*; Chaucer: *ere*, *dere*, *were*, *stere*, but *herie* (on the personal inflexion



cf. § 184). If any other consonant but *r* precedes, the semi-vowel is assimilated to it in O.E., and the result is that *ʃʃ* becomes *cʃ* (i.e. *gg*), *ff* becomes *bb*: *tellan*, *settan*, *streccan*, *dswebban*, *lecjan* etc. In Chaucer the gemination is, as a rule, preserved and carried through the whole inflexion of the Present: *dwellen*, *tellen*, *sellen*, *letten*, *setten*, *recchen*, *strecchen*, with the exception of *bb*, that, by analogy, yields to *v* from *f* (*asweven*) and *cʃ*, which maintains itself either as *gġ* (*ddš*) (*abeggen*, *leggen*), or is supplanted by *y*, *i* from *ʃ* (*abyen* *abeyen*, *leyen*, *seyen*), cf. § 100 Note; § 114 Note 2.

**162. The Preterite** is formed by means of the ending *-ede* (oldest English form *-idæ* from *ida*): O.E. *erede*, *derede*, *werede*, and in the same way in Chaucer, so far as the forms occur: O.E. *styrede*, Ch. *sterede*, but, on the other hand, O.E. *herede*, Ch. *heried(e)* by analogy with the Present; O.E. *dswefedede*, Ch. (*aswevedede*) etc.

Excepted are, however:

(a) a number of short-stemmed verbs which dropped the *i* at an early period, and hence, in contradistinction to the Present, have a non-mutated root-vowel. In Chaucer occur: *sōlde* (O.E. *salde*, *sealde*) from *sellen*, *tōlde* (O.E. *tealde*) from *tellan*, *raughte* Troil. II. 447 (O.E. *reahite*) from *recchen* (O.E. *reccan*), *straughte* (O.E. *streakite*) from *strecchen* (O.E. *streccan*), as well as *sayde*, *seyde* from *seyen*, *sayen* (*sæjde* from *secjan*, which, however, is of mixed inflexion in O.E. Sievers, Ags. Gr. §§ 415, 416, Note 3, P.B.B. ix. 297). Note in this connection also the originally anomalous formation of the Preterite *boughte* from (*a*)*byen* (*a*)*beyen* (O.E. *bohte* from *bycjan*, Goth. *baūhta* from *bugjan*).



The syncope is fluctuating in *dwelled(e) dwelte* (O.E. *dwealde* and *dwelede*).

The verb *liven* (O.E. *libban*, *lifian*) which in O.E. follows the mixed (third) conjugation, has a Pret. *livede* (O.E. *lifde*, but later also *lifede lifode*, etc.; cf. Sievers, P.B.B. ix., 297, N. 2). On the other hand, the Pret. of *haven han* (O.E. *habban*) which originally belonged to the same conjugation is *hadde* (O.E. *hæfde*). The verb *weyen* 'to weigh' (O.E. *wejan*, Pret. *wæj*), which has passed from Cl. I. of the gradation verbs into the weak inflexion, has a Pret. *weyede*.

NOTE. On the change of *d* to *t* in the suffix (*e*)*de*, as well as on the modifications of the consonantal terminations of the root, cf. § 170.

**163.** The P.P. is formed by means of the ending *-ed*: *stered*, *heried* (O.E. *hered*); *asweved*; after the same model also *lifed* (O.E. *jelifd*). The verbs mentioned under § 162 a, have a syncopated form of the Participle in O.E., also *lecjan* (*je*)*lejd*, but the verbs in *-d -t* show the syncope as a rule only in polysyllabic inflexional forms. In Chaucer the syncopated Preterite of this group always has a syncopated Participle: *sold*, *told*, *straught*, *sayd seyde*, *bought*, *leyde*, *let*, *set*, in the same way also *had* (O.E. *hæfd*).

**164. Cl. I. (B). with long root-vowel.** The Present regularly suppresses the *j* or *i* in O.E. after a preceding consonant:—*fēle*, *dēme*, *hēre* (*hýre*), *cēpe*, *lēfe* (*lýfe*), *jrēte*, *mēte*, *fēde*, *læne*, *mæne*, *lære*, *læfe*, *swæte*, *læde*, *spræde*, *cýde*, *hýde*; in Chaucer: *feele*, *deeme*, *heere*, *keepe*, *leeve* *bileeve*, *greete*, *meete*, *feede*, *lene*, *mene*, *meene*, *leere*, *leve*, *swete* *sweete*, *lede* *leede*, *sprede*, *hyde*: O.E. *lhte*, *læste*, Chaucer: *lighte*, *laste*; O.E.



*blende, rende, sende, wende*, and the same in Chaucer; O.E. *blence, menje, fylle, stynte, jyrde, cysse, lyste*, Chaucer: *blenche, menge, fulfille, stente, girde, kisse kesse, lyste*, etc.

165. The Pret. has in O.E. regularly a syncopated form (for exceptions cf. Sievers, *Ags. Gr.* § 404 N. 1.), and this is also generally the case in Chaucer: *felte, ferde, herde, kepte, grette, mette, fedde, lente, mente, lafte, swatte, ladde, spradde, kidde, lighte, laste, blente, rente, sente, wente, bleynte, stente, girte, kiste, leste*. After *m*, however, a weak *e* is inserted: *demed(e), seemed(e)*, but rarely otherwise.

166. In O.E. the P.P. is syncopated as a rule only in inflexional forms expanded by the addition of a syllable (in verbs in *-d -t*, sometimes also in other cases); in Chaucer even the uninflected forms of the P.P. generally appear syncopated: *felt, herd, kept, gret, met, fed, biwreyd* (from *biwreye*, O.E. *wréjan*), *teyd* (O.E. *téjan týjan*), *lent, ment, laft, sprad, sprad, lad, ywet*, (O.E. *ǵewæted*), *kid, hid hed, blent, rent, sent, went, bleynt, ymeynd, spilt* (from *spillen*), *girt, kist*, etc. But *kythed* occurs by the side of *kid*, *afered* beside the more frequent form *aferd*, *stented* from *stenten*, *lered* from *leren* (Pret. apparently not found); naturally no syncope in *deemed, seemed*, etc.

167. Originally strong verbs with a long root-syllable which become more or less completely weak, also generally have syncopated forms: *weepe*, Pret. *wepte, sleepe—slepte, drede—dradde—drad, rede—radde reddē, creepe—crepte, cleeve—clefte, leese—lqste—lqst*; but *walke* has a Pret. *walked(e), syke—syked(e)* and *sightē*,



unless the latter form be due to a M.E. Pres. *sihten* (cf. Stratmann 547<sup>b</sup>); the P.P. of *breyden* is *broyded* (§ 140) and of (*for*) *weepen*, with adjectival force, *for-weeped*.

168. On the modifications which the root-vowel undergoes in the mutated forms in consequence of the shortening, cf. § 140. Note the metathesis whereby *encte*, *enc(e)d* becomes M.E. *eynte*, *eynt*; *eng(e)d* becomes *eynd*; hence *blenche* *bleynte* *bleynt*, *drenche* *dreynte* *dreynt*, *quenche* P.P. *yqueynt*, *menge*, P.P. *ymeynd*, *senge*—*seynd*, *sprenge*—*spreynd* *yspreynd*.

NOTE. Amongst the weak forms of originally strong verbs the P.P. *lȳst* and the Pret. *lȳste*, the *ȳ* of which is due to *lȳren*, and the P.P. *broyded* from O.E. *broȳden* should be noted.

169. The following classes of long-stemmed verbs have a non-mutated vowel in the Pret. and P.P.:

(1) The verbs in which these forms were originally anomalous: O.E. *þencan*—*þōhte*—*þōht*, Chaucer: *thenken* *thenchen*—*thoughte*—*thought*; O.E. *þyncan*—*þūhte*—*þūht*; Chaucer: *thinken*, which in the Pret. (and P.P.) instead of the phonetically correct *ou* = *ū* has acquired *ou* by assimilation to *thenken*, (cf. for instance, S.T. 279/3933 [B 3933] *as that him thoughte: broughte*); O.E. *wyrcean*—*worhte*—*worht*, Ch. *werken*—*wroughte*—*wrought*. Here belongs also the strong Pres. with weak Pret. and P.P. O.E. *brinjan*—*brōhte*—*brōht*, which in O.E., has, on the one hand the complementary forms *branj* *brunjon* *jebrunjen*, on the other, *brenjan*. These disappear, however, in the M.E. period. Chaucer: *bringen*—*broughte*—*brought*.

(2) The verbs which at an early period were inflected by analogy with Cl. 1.: O.E. *réð(e)an* (also



*réccan*) and *séc(e)an*—*róhte*, *sóhte*—*sóht*, in Chaucer: *recchen*—*roughte*, *seeken* *seechen*—*soughte*—*sought*.

(3) *ræc(e)an*, *tæc(e)an* fluctuate in O.E.: *ræhte* North. *ráhte*, *tæhte* *táhte*—*tæht* *táht*; in Chaucer this fluctuation is no longer apparent, on account of the identical development of shortened *æ* and *á* (§ 50): *rechen*—*raughte*, *techen*—*taughte*—*taught*.

**170. The consonantal changes** which take place in the syncopated forms of both the short and long-stemmed verbs of this class are the following:

(a) the ending *-de* becomes *-te* in O.E. after *p*, *t*, *c* and voiceless *s* (also *ss* and *x*); in Chaucer the ending is *-te*, and in the P.P., under the same conditions, *-t* instead of *-de* and *-d*: *kepte*, *grette*, *dreynte* (from *drencte*), *kiste*, but also after an originally voiced *s*, as proved by *lōste*, *lōst* from *leesen*; after *f*: *lafte*, *clefte*, and further in a number of cases which, for the sake of better classification, will be discussed below.

(β) In pre-historic O.E. *c* (= *k*) before *t* became *h* (= *χ*), hence forms like O.E. *þóhte*, *þúhte*, *worhte*, *sóhte*, *róhte*, *reahte*, *streahte*, *ræhte* *ráhte*, *tæhte* *táhte*; in Chaucer: *thoughte* *wroughte*, *soughte*, *roughte*, *raughte*, *straughte*, *raughte*, *taughte*. In later O.E. the same change sometimes took place, as the result of analogy. In the syncopated forms of the Pret. and P.P. in Chaucer we regularly find *ght* for *kt* (unless *k* be preceded by another consonant, as *dreynte* from *drencte*), for instance, *pighite* from *picchen* etc.

NOTE 1. Amongst the old forms in *-ta* we see that in O.E. *bohte* *bróhte*, Chaucer *bughte* *broughte*, *j* before *t* has also become *h* (= *χ*). In the really syncopated forms in (*i*)*da*, (*e*)*de* this change cannot occur, since *d* after *j* does not become *t*, cf., for instance, O.E. *lezde*, M.E. *leyde*.



(γ)  $\dot{d} + d(e)$  becomes  $dd(e)$ : *kythen kiddē kid* (= *kidd*).

(δ) Before the ending *-de(-te)* the gemination is simplified, but, in point of fact, only graphically: O.E. *fylde, cyste*; Chaucer: P.P. *fulfild*, Pret. *kiste*. Originally single *l* as in O.E. *tealde, sealde* remains phonetically short in cases like *tolde, solde*, on the other hand, *dwelte* by the side of *dwelled(e)* from *dwealde dwelede* has actually long *l*.

(ε)  $dd + de$  or (cons. +  $\dot{d}$ ) +  $de$  becomes *dde* or cons. +  $\dot{d}e$ ,  $tt + t$  or (cons. +  $\dot{t}$ ) +  $te$  becomes *tte* or cons. +  $\dot{t}e$ . In the P.P.  $dd + d$ ,  $tt + t$  also = *dd*, *tt*, which, as in other cases, when final, are represented by single  $\dot{d}$ ,  $\dot{t}$ , cf. *sette*, Pret. *sette*, P.P. *set*. But in Chaucer older *ndē*, *nd* from  $nd + de$ ,  $nd + d$ , older *lde*, *ld* from  $ld + de$ ,  $ld + d$ , as well as older *rde*, *rd* from  $rd + de$ ,  $rd + d$ , have become *nte* or *nt*, *lte* or *lt*, *rte* or *rt* respectively: *wende*, Pret. *wente*, P.P. *went*, *sende sente sent*, *bilde bilte bilt*, *welde welte*, *girde girte girt*.

(ζ) Chaucer frequently uses *-te -t* for *-de, d* after single or geminated *n*: *mente, lente*, but *wende* from *weenen*, *brenne brente brent* (but P.P. also *brend*, cf. Fame 173 S.T. 83/2896) [A 2896], likewise sometimes after a single or geminated *l*: *felte, felt*; *dwelte, spilt*, on the other hand not only as a matter of course *tolde told*, *solde sold*, but also *fulfild*.

NOTE 2. Some MSS. spell even the syncopated participles in original *-enjed* with final *t*: *ymeynt, spreynt* (by false analogy with *bleynt, dreynt*), but Chaucer apparently wrote only *ymeynd, spreynd, seynd*. The P.P. of (*kemben*), Pret. *kembde* is *kembd*, variants being *kempd* and *kempt*.



**171. Cl. II. Present.** The O.E. *i* or *j* (*i ij* also *j*) of the termination which traces back to older *ī*, as *ī* in its turn to *ōj* (for which reason no mutation of the root-vowel, unless the theme is an *i-* or *jō-* stem) is generally suppressed in M.E. In Chaucer: *live* (§ 162), *prike* (O.E. *pricie*), *love*, *wone*, *clepe*, *answere* (O.E. *andsware*, influenced by *swere* O.E. *swerie*), *make*, *twicche* (O.E. *twiccie*), *longe*, *folwe*, *axe*, *reve*, *clothe*, *looke*, etc.

On *astonie*, *harie*, cf. below.

**172. The Preterite** is formed in O.E. by means of the ending *-ōde*, later *-ode*, also *-ade*, *-ude*, *-ede*, the P.P. by the ending *-ōd*, later *-od*, *-ad*, in the inflected forms also *-ed*. In Chaucer the endings Pret. *-ed(e)*, P.P. *-ed*, are the rule. Examples: Pret. *livede*, *lovede*, *woned(e)*, *cleped(e)*, *longed*, *folwed*, *axed*, *wyped*, *looked*, etc. On the apocope of the final *-e*, cf. § 194. P.P. *lived* (§ 163), *loved*, *woned*, *mased* *amased*, *waked*, *folwed*, *axed*, *looked*, *yfetered*, etc.

**173.** In some verbs syncope occurs as the result of analogy:—*priken*—*prighte*; *twicchen*—*twighte*—*twight*; *pleyen*—*pleyde*; *reven*—*rafte*—*raft*; but also *bireved*; *answēren* (generally accented thus)—*answērde* (by the side of *ánswerd* with apocope of the final *e*)—*answēred* *answērd*; *maken*—*made* and *maked*—*maad* and *maked*; *clothen*—*cladde* and *clothed* (O.E. *clādōde*)—*clad*, exceptionally *cled*, Blaunche 252, and *clothed*; *clepe*—*cleped(e)*—*cleped* and *clept*; (*shrede*) *toshrede*—*shredde*. Chaucer affords no genuine instance of the strong inflexion of the last-mentioned verb, which occurs elsewhere in M.E., and finds an analogy in the Mlg. *schrōden* P.P. *geschrōden*, *shredde* occurs S.T.



410/227 [E. 227] where Harl. 7334 reads *shred*, which may, however, stand for the apocopated weak form.

174. The verb *astonien* may be due to a confusion of O.E. *stunian* with O.Fr. *estoner*, by the side of which *estonier*, or *estonir*, seems to have occurred (a P.P. is proved by the occurrence of the Fem. *estonie*): Pres. *astonie*, Pret. *astonyed astoneyd* or *astoned(e)* S.T. 413/316 [E. 316]. P.P. *astonied* or *astoned*. P.P. *astoned* is proved Troil. I. 274 by the rime, but the form *astonied* seems likewise to have been used by Chaucer, at least in the Pret., and probably also in the P.P.—*harien* to 'drag, traho,' points, at first sight, to O.Fr. *harier*, but the Pres., as well as the P.P. *haried*, suggests a confusion of the French verb with O.E. *hergian*, the *ɣ* of which is thematic. The Pret. *harwede* corresponds to O.E. *herȝode*.

175. Adjectives formed from substantives by means of the participial ending *-ed* are very rarely syncopated; but *herd* and *yherd* 'hairy' (: *berd*) occur.

176. Some of the verbs borrowed from other Germanic dialects have syncopated forms, of which the following are examples:—(*shedden*, O.Fris. *skedda schedda*), Pret. *shedde* and *shadde* (treatment of the *u*-root as an *a*-root); *steden* (*bisteden*, Mdu. *steden besteden*, cf. O.N. *stedja*, P.P. *staddr*). P.P. *bistad*; (*hussen hushen*, Lg. *huschen hussen*), P.P. *hust*; *skippen* (origin?) Pret. *skipte*; *sterten* (O.N. *sterta*), Pret. *sterte*, but also *asteried* (: *converted* P.P.); *shryken*, Olg. *scrīcōn*) Pret. *shrighte*, but also *shryked* (*skryked*). *deyen*, *dyen* (O.N. *döyja* is strong, cf., however, § 41 Note), Pret. *deyde dyde*, *dyed*. In contradistinction



to the usage of the languages from which they are derived Preterites and Participles like *drouped*, *reysed* (from *reysen* 'to raise, rear'), *weyved* (O.N.), *reysed* 'travelled' (Lg.), are not syncopated.

NOTE. The verb *putten* (of obscure, perhaps Keltic, origin, in older M.E. texts also *puten*) inflects *putte*—*put*.

177. The inflexion of verbs borrowed from O.Fr. is, in the main, based upon the strong (stem-accented) forms of the Romance Present: M.E. Present *crye*, *frye*, *preye*, *cacche*, *preeche*; *suffre*, *keevre*, *covre*, *assente*; *blaundisshe*, *punisshe*, *vanische*, *accomplice*, *cheryce*; *suffyse*; *despyse*, *playne*, *remayne*; *deceyve* *receyve*, *meeve*, *plese*, etc.

The verbs which have an inchoative ending in the Romance Present generally retain it in M.E.; *sese*, however, drops it, whilst in *obeye* (for *obeyshe*) only the consonantal element is lost, but the *i* has united with the preceding vowel to form a diphthong. The latter phenomenon, without the former, also appears in *rejoyce*.

*venquisshe* is a late addition to the verbs in *-isshe*. It seems to be derived from the Fr. Perf. instead of the Present. On the verbs *chastyse*, *sacrifyse* and *exercyse*, cf. § 111. A few verbs are based on the forms of the O.Fr. strong P.P. in *-t*: *countrefete*, *peynite*. Similarly *seynte* is formed from O.Fr. *feint*, but the M.E. verb does not acquire the meaning of the O.Fr. *feindre*, to which M.E. *feyne* corresponds in sense.

NOTE. The stem-extension which O.Fr. *jouster* undergoes in M.E. *justne* does not seem to pertain to Chaucer's language: cf. S.T. 3/96 [Prol. 96] *juste*, though Harl. 7334 *justne*.



178. Romance verbs generally retain in M.E. the accent of the Romance form on which the English Present is based.

Excepted from this rule are :

(α) a few verbs in O.Fr. *-ier*, which in M.E. throw back the accent on to the root-syllable immediately preceding : *contrárie*, *stúdie*, *cárie*, *márie*, *hárie* (§ 174, on *tárie* cf. § 48, V.).

(β) the verbs in *-isshe -yce*, which, as a rule, retain the accent on the termination, but may throw it on to the preceding root-syllable, the latter chiefly in the Pret. and P.P. *púnished ypúnished*, but also in the Pres. *lángwisseth*.

(γ) The verbs in O.Fr. *-iner*, Lat. *-inare*, as *enlumyne*, *imagyne*, at least in the Pret. and P.P. *enlúmyned* (not, however, for instance, a verb like *enfamyne*, P.P. *enfamyned*). Also verbs like French *empoisonner*, *emprisoner*, cf. *empoisoned*.

179. Verbs borrowed from O.Fr.—with the exception of *stryve* (§ 154)—follow the weak inflexion. The Pret. is formed by means of the ending *-ed(e)*, the P.P. by means of the ending *-ed*: Pret. and P.P. *suffred*, *assented*, *punished*, *playned*, *plesed*, etc.

180. Syncope occurs especially in the Pret. of verbs the theme of which ends in a vowel : *crye*—*cryde* ; *preye*—*preyde* ; *paye*—*payde*. The verbs in simple *i* have in addition the non-synocopated form which the poet uses at any rate for purposes of rime : *cryed* beside *cryde*, *espyed* beside *espyde*, *signified*. In the P.P. syncope occurs in verbal themes in *ay*, *ey*, but not in *i* : *payd* *apayd*, *affrayd*, *preyd*, etc., beside which—and more frequently—*payed*



*apayed, affrayed, arrayed, assayed* etc., but exclusively it seems, *cryed, allyed* etc.

181. In accordance with a general rule (§ 257) the *e* of the ending *-ed* becomes mute when the antepenultimate bears the accent, though the syncope is not as a rule expressed graphically: *pūnisshed, ypūnisshed, vānisshed, enlūmined, empoisoned* etc. This rule is rarely violated: *enlūmined* A.B.C. 73 (cf. Pret. *cristened* S.T. 534/217 [G. 217], unless the passage should be emended *cristned hath*: Ell. Hengw. and Corpus read *cristned*, which as it stands is metrically inadequate, but in point of fact is the only correct form). In the case of themes in *-isshe* some MSS. occasionally suppress the *i*, instead of the *e*, of the inflexional ending, cf. S.T. 19/657 [Prol. 657] Petworth: *punsched*.

NOTE. Verbs like *contrarie, studie, carie, marie* are not to be regarded as paroxytons, as the *i* is only a semi-vowel, hence *studied, married* etc.

182. Proofs of more extensive syncope are afforded by the Pret. and P.P. of *cacchen* which follows the analogy of the native verb *lacchen* (O.E. *læccan*): *caughte*—*caught*, further the Participles *quit* (= *quitt* from *quyted*) from *quyten*, *enoynt* from (*enoynten*), which itself is formed from the O.Fr. P.P. *enoint*, likewise *depeynt* from *depeynten*. On syncope in the Personal and Numeral inflexion, cf. below.

183. The Chaucerian P.P. *enoynt* might be considered a direct derivation from the O.Fr. P.P. We must doubtless assume the P.P. *creaat* to be formed by immediate analogy with Lat. *creatus* (though probably after the model of French learned



words). Other words of similar formation are used only as adjectives, as, for instance, *desolaat*, *elaat*, *exaltaat*, *fortunaat*, others again, like *curaat*, *prelaat*, only as substantives.

## INFLEXION OF THE PRESENT.

**184. Indicative.** In the following paradigms we shall consider primarily those O.E. forms upon which the Chaucerian ones are based, without, however, indicating isolated late phenomena which may seem to foreshadow the M.E. development. Chaucerian forms which are the result of analogy will be marked by special type ; but this seemed superfluous in the case of the Pl. ending which differs uniformly from O.E.

O.E.	Chaucer.
S. <i>fealle</i>	<i>falle.</i>
<i>feallest (felst)</i>	<i>fallest.</i>
<i>fealled (feld)</i>	<i>falleth.</i>
Pl. <i>feallad</i>	<i>fallen.</i>
S. <i>bere</i>	<i>bere.</i>
<i>berest (birest)</i>	<i>berest.</i>
<i>bered (bired)</i>	<i>bereth.</i>
Pl. <i>berad</i>	<i>beren.</i>
S. <i>licȝe</i>	<i>lye.</i>
<i>lijest</i>	<i>lyest.</i>
<i>lijest (līd)</i>	<i>lyeth (lyth).</i>
Pl. <i>licȝad</i>	<i>lyen.</i>
S. <i>bidde</i>	<i>bidde.</i>
<i>bidest (bitst)</i>	<i>biddest.</i>
<i>bided (bit)</i>	<i>biddeth (bit).</i>
Pl. <i>biddad</i>	<i>bidden.</i>



O.E.:	Chaucer:
S. <i>werie</i>	were.
<i>werest</i>	<i>werest.</i>
<i>wered̃</i>	<i>wereth.</i>
Pl. <i>weriad̃</i>	weren.
S. <i>herie</i>	<i>herie.</i>
<i>herest</i>	heriest.
<i>hered̃</i>	herieth.
Pl. <i>heriad̃</i>	<i>herien.</i>
S. <i>telle</i>	<i>telle.</i>
<i>telest</i>	tellest.
<i>teled̃</i>	telleth.
Pl. <i>tellad̃</i>	<i>tellen.</i>
S. <i>seȝe</i>	seye.
<i>seȝest (seȝst)</i>	<i>seyest (seyst).</i>
<i>seȝed̃ (seȝd̃)</i>	<i>seyth.</i>
Pl. <i>seȝad̃</i>	seyen.
S. <i>lufie</i>	love.
<i>lufast</i>	<i>lovest.</i>
<i>lufad̃</i>	<i>loveth.</i>
Pl. <i>lufiad̃</i>	loven.

185. The form of the stem in M.E. is determined partly by the O.E. form of the 1st. Pers. Sing. and the three persons of the Plural, partly by the 2nd. and 3rd. Pers. Sing. By the former in case of gemination, with the exception of *ȝ* and *bb*. By the latter when the 1st. Pers. ends in *-ie*, with the exception of *herie* and possibly *astonien* (§ 174). The formation of the Present stem of Romance words calls for no comment in addition to the remarks made in §§ 177, 178. The inflexion of the Pres. Ind. is sufficiently illustrated by the paradigms given above.



As regards the endings, only the Plural terminations would require explanation, which had, however, better not be attempted in a grammatical monograph such as this.

It is noteworthy that Chaucer in exceptional cases forms the 3rd. Pers. Sing. by means of the ending *-es*, instead of *-eth*, a usage peculiar to the Northern dialects: *telles* (: *elles*) *Blaunche* 73.

**186. Syncope and Apocope.** A. Syncope occurs in a limited degree in the 2nd. Pers., to a greater extent in the 3rd. Pers. Sing. In the 2nd. Pers. there occur by the side of forms like *seyest*, *leyest*, doublets like *seyst*, *leyst*, cf. further § 259. In the 3rd. Pers. syncope is the rule in *seyth*, *leyth*, and by the side of *lyeth* we find *lyth*. We also find *comth*, *makth* beside *cometh*, *maketh*, likewise *loveth* A.B.C. 71, *bereth* 192/1937 [B. 1937]; 197/2091 [B. 2091]; *throweth* 537/288 [G. 288], *lyketh* *Troil.* III. 385 etc. If the syncopated *e* is preceded by a lingual, the following consonantal changes, which go back to the O.E. period, take place: (*d*)*d* + *th* and *t*(*t*) + *th* become *tt* (spelt *t*), *s* + *th* becomes *st*, cf. *slit* beside *slydeth*, *bit* beside *biddeth*, *fint* beside *fyndeth*, *bit* beside *byteth*, *sit* beside *sitteth*, *set* beside *setteth*, *lest* beside *lesteth*, *rist* beside *ryseth*. *th* + *th* ought to become long *th*; but cf. *wryth* for *wrytheth* (MSS. *wrype* *writhe*) *Troil.* III. 1231; there is nothing new to be learnt from *worth*, which always stands for *wortheth*.

In the Pl. syncope is rare: *seyn*, *leyn* beside *seyen*, *leyen*.

B. Apocope of *n* is very frequent in the Plural: *falle*, *bere*, *telle*, *lye*, *seye* etc.



187. The verb *have* inflects: Sg. *have, hast, hath*, Pl. *haven han have*, also *haveth*, the latter especially for the 2nd. Pers. Pl. Verbs like *see* or *slee* inflect: Sing. *see, seest, seeth*, Pl. *seen see*; Sing. *slee sleest sleeth* Pl. *sleēn, slee*.

188. **Conjunctive:** O.E. Sing. *fealle, bere, licje, bidde, werie, herie, telle, secje, lufie*; Pl. *feallen, beren, licjen, bidden, werien, herien, tellen, secjen, lufien*. Ch. Sing. *falle, bere, lye, bidde, were, herie, telle, seye, love*; Pl. *fallen, beren, lyen, bidden, weren, herien, tellen, seyen, loven*.

Apocope of the Pl. *n* is not less frequent in the Conjunctive than in the Indicative.

**189. Imperative.**

(a) Strong: Sing. *ber*, Pl. *bereth*; *com, cometh*; *tak, taketh*; *chees, cheeseth*; *help, helpeth*.

(β) Weak: (*were, wereth*; *herie, herieth*); *telle, telleth*. Likewise in Romance verbs: (*suffre*), *suffreth*; (*studie*), *studieth* etc.

Shortened forms of the Pl.: *come, take* or *taak, chees, help, tel*. Forms like *herieth* are incapable of shortening; likewise *studieth* and *suffreth*; in any case shortening is rare in Romance verbs.

190. **Infinitive:** O.E. *feallan, beran, licjan, biddan, werian, tellan, secjan, abcyjan, lecjan, lufian*. Ch. *fallen, beren, lyen, bidden, weren tellen, seyen, abyen abeyen abeggen, leyen, leggen, loven* etc. Apocope of *n* is frequent: *falle*; *bere, lye* etc.; *see, flee, slee* beside *seen, fleen, sleēn, have* etc.

The **Gerund** (O.E. *beranne* etc., M.E. *berenne berene*) has in Chaucer as a rule become like the Infinitive; only a few forms are extant which were



originally dissyllabic, or have become dissyllabic by syncope : (*to*) *seene*, (*to*) *doone*, (*to*) *seyne* (O.E. *séonne*, *dónne*, *secjanne*), but we also find *to seen*, *to see* ; *to doon* ; *to seyn*, *to seye*.

**191. Participle.** *fallinge*, *beringe*, *lyinge*, *biddinge* etc. Apocope of the *e* is not infrequent, especially in rime. The isolated instances of the North-English participle in *-and*, which Harl. 7334 introduces in the Sompnour's Tale, are not confirmed by the Six-Text.

NOTE 1. The ending *-inge* is due to a confusion of the O.E. participial ending *-ende*, which in the M.E. period assumed the form *-inde* in Southern, with the ending of the Verbal Subst. M.E. *-ing-inge* (O.E. *-unġ-ing*). The similarity in form seems to have been the immediate reason for this confusion, since as regards their respective functions the M.E. Part. in *-inge* is easily distinguished from the Verbal Subst. in *-ing(e)*. But since the Participle in a previous period sometimes acquired the function of the Gerund, cases certainly have resulted in course of time—in N.E.—in which the participle or gerund appears to have been confounded with the Verbal Substantive.

NOTE 2. The Anglo-Norm. Participle in *-aunt* occurs only in the function of a noun. It is generally used as an adjective : *table dormaunt*, *thief erraunt*, likewise *joynaunt*, *trenchaunt*, *consentaunt*, *suffisaunt*, *repentaunt*, *accordaunt*, *plesaunt*. Substantives are, for instance, *remenaunt*, *servaunt* etc.

## INFLEXION OF THE PRETERITE.

**192. The Preterite Indicative in strong verbs :**

O.E.:	Chaucer :
S. <i>hēold</i>	<i>heeld</i> .
<i>hēolde</i>	?
<i>hēold</i>	<i>heeld</i> .
Pl. <i>hēoldon</i>	<i>heelden</i> .



O.E. :	Chaucer :
S. <i>sonȝ</i>	<i>song.</i>
<i>sunȝe</i>	<i>songe.</i>
<i>sonȝ</i>	<i>song.</i>
Pl. <i>sunȝon</i>	<i>songen.</i>
S. <i>biȝon</i> ( <i>biȝan</i> )	<i>bigan.</i>
<i>biȝunne</i>	<i>bigonne.</i>
<i>biȝon</i> ( <i>biȝan</i> )	<i>bigan.</i>
Pl. <i>biȝunnon</i>	<i>bigonnen.</i>
S. <i>bær</i>	<i>bar</i> beer.
<i>bære</i>	<i>bere</i> bare bar.
<i>bær</i>	<i>bar</i> beer.
Pl. <i>bæron</i>	<i>beren</i> baren.
S. <i>spræc</i>	<i>spak.</i>
<i>spræce</i>	<i>spak.</i>
<i>spræc</i>	<i>spak.</i>
Pl. <i>spræcon</i>	<i>speken</i> spaken.
S. <i>swór</i>	<i>swoor.</i>
<i>swóre</i>	[ <i>tooke</i> from <i>taken</i> § 193.]
<i>swór</i>	<i>swoor.</i>
Pl. <i>swóron</i>	<i>sworen.</i>

193. The 2nd. Pers. Sing. is clearly distinguished from the 1st. and 3rd. persons only in verbs belonging to gradation-class I. A.  $\beta$ : dissyllabic *sonȝe*, for instance, S.T. 585/294 [H. 294], but treated as a monosyllable in Harl. 7334, trisyllabic *bigonne* S.T. 543/442 [G. 442], changed by Harl. 7334 to *bigonnest*, dissyllabic *founde* Troil. III. 362. But even in this group the 2nd. Pers. is assimilated to the 1st. and 3rd., for instance, *thou drank*; cf. also monosyllabic *tooke* Blaunche 483 (from *taken*).



NOTE. Mark as interesting the reading of Corpus, S.T. 71/2472 [A. 2472] confirmed by Harl. 7334: *as þou him bihight* (:knight Nom.), Lansd. *as þou him hihle*, the remaining MSS. *as thou hast him hight*. If Chaucer wrote *þou bihight*, we should have to assume a strong Pret. *bihight* (cf. § 135).

The Plural often drops the final *-n*. Sometimes the Sing. is used for the Plural: *yaf, lay, sat, bigan, wan, ran* etc.

**194. The weak Pret. Ind.** has the following endings in O.E.: Sg. *-e, -es(ɪ), -e*; Pl. *-on*; Chaucer: *-e, -est, -e*; Pl. *-en*.

The *-e* of the 1st. and 3rd. Pers. Sing. becomes mute in the non-syncopated forms, and is generally dropped in the better MSS.: *axed, lɔnged, looked, wyped* etc., also *deemed, seemed* (where the medial vowel is re-inserted). Hence *cleped* by the side of *clepte*, *maked* beside *made*, and *dȳed* beside *dȳde*, *espȳed* beside *espȳde* etc. After an originally short theme the *e* is occasionally retained: *werede* beside *wered*, but especially when the character of the root-vowel resists complete lengthening, hence generally *lovede*. In such a case the medial *e* must necessarily be treated as mute (*loveðe*); but there is no doubt that the form *loved* occurs also. In the Pl. the non-syncopated forms generally drop the ending *-en*. Rare are forms like trisyllabic *weyeden* 13/454 [Prol. 454], *yelledēn* 298/4579 [B. 4579], *wonēden* Leg. 712, *useden* ib. 787, *stremēden* Troil. IV. 247 (variant *wcptyn that*), or like quadrisyllabic *asseegeden* Troil. I. 60. The Romance verb *assenten* has Pret. Pl. *assented*, or, with unusual syncope, *assenten*.

The syncopated forms drop the *-n* when metre or rime requires it; and in the 1st. and 3rd. Pers.



Sing., and even in the Pl., they may from considerations of metre drop the *e* of the termination. (Cf. § 261.)

The following examples will illustrate the normal inflexion of the weak Pret.

S. <i>t̃q̃lde</i>	<i>lovēde</i>	<i>loved.</i>
<i>t̃q̃ldest</i>	<i>lovēdest</i>	<i>lovedest.</i>
<i>t̃q̃lde</i>	<i>lovēde</i>	<i>loved.</i>
Pl. <i>t̃q̃lden</i>	? <i>lovēden</i>	<i>loved(en).</i>
S. <i>axed</i>	<i>preeved</i>	<i>cryde cryed.</i>
<i>axedest</i>	<i>preevedest</i>	<i>crydest.</i>
<i>axed</i>	<i>preeved</i>	<i>cryde cryed.</i>
Pl. <i>axed(en)</i>	<i>preeved(en)</i>	<i>cryden.</i>

NOTE. S.T. 117/4088 [A. 4088] the ending *-est* of the 2nd. Pers. Sing. appears to be dropped in the speech of a Northumbrian student : *ne had thou*, or (with Harl. 7334), *nad thou*, instead of *naddest thou*. Only Ell. has syncope in this case : *nadstow*, and Camb. Gg. the full form *ne haddist þou* which is at variance with the metre.

**195. The Pret. Conj.** has in O.E. the following endings, which remain unchanged in Chaucer : Sg. *-e*, Pl. *-en*. Apocope occurs under the same conditions as in the Indicative.

In the weak Pret. the 2nd. Pers. Sing. has in Chaucer frequently assumed the endings of the Indicative ; cf. *ne haddestow* which read *naddestou* Troil. IV. 276, *wōldest* Troil. IV. 282 etc.

In O.E. the strong Pret. Conj. follows the grade of the 2nd. Pers. Sing. and the Pl. Ind. In Chaucer assimilation to the Ind. has generally taken place.

**196.** With regard to the **P.P.** note further the following :

In some verbs the strong P.P. occurs also in a shortened form. The verbs with an originally short



root ending in *-r*, less consistently those in *-l*, frequently syncopate the *e* of the ending: *børn*, *lørn*, *sworn*, *stoln*, likewise the verbs *lȳen*, *seen*, *slēen*, P.P. *leyn*, *seyn*, *slayn* (probably never *slayen*).

Moreover, some verbs with an originally short root drop the *n* of the ending and let the *e* become mute: *comē* beside *comen*, *drivē* beside *driven*, *stolē* beside *stolen stoln*, *writē* beside *writen* etc. When the root-vowel is originally long the *n* is more rarely dropped (in order to facilitate elision of the *e*), as *sonje* S.T. 45/1540 [A. 1540], *wonne* 2/58 [Prol. 59] *yknowe* 13/423 [Prol. 423] etc. (cf. on the other hand the verbs without a connecting vowel, § 197). Forms without *n* and with a syllabic *e* as *falle*, *bore*, *lōre*, *swore*, *slawe*, *seye* occur principally in rime. But, used with the force of adjectives, *bake* (*bake mete* S.T. 10/343 [Prol. 343]), *dronke* (*a dronke man* 37/1264 [A. 1264], cf. also ib. 1263 [A. 1262] where elision takes place) occur as dissyllables within the metre.

The P.P., both strong and weak, is often compounded with the particle *y-* (O.E. *je-*): *ycomen*, *yfallen*, *ywrȳen*, *yleyd*, *ydrad*, *ymaad* etc., also the P.P. of Romance verbs: *ypreved*, *yserved* etc. Verbs which have already adopted another prefix do not admit of composition with *y*, unless the prefix has ceased to be felt as such, as in the case of *yfreten*.

NOTE. In rare cases only are other verbal forms united with the prefix *y-*, as the Inf. *yknowe* S.T. 505/887 [F. 887], *ysee*, Blanche 205, Leg. 15, *yfynde* Leg. 425 [cf. Globe, Leg. 425 N.].



## ANOMALOUS VERBS.

**197. Go.** Pres. Ind. Sg. *gø*, *gøøst*, *gøøth*; Pl. *gøøn*, Conj. Sg. *gø*; Pl. *gøøth*. Imp. Sg. *gø*; Pl. *gøøth*. Inf. *gøøn*, *gø*. P. Pres. *gøing*. P.P. *gøøn gø* (especially in *ygø agø*). *Yeede* (O.E. *jetode*, old Aorist) and *wente* from *wenden*, are used as Preterites: both forms are inflected weak.

**doo.** Pres. Ind. *doo*, *doost*, *dooth*; *doon*. Conj. *doo*; *doon*. Imp. *doo*; *dooth*. Inf. *doon doo*. P. Pres. *døing*. P.P. *doon døøn* (§ 31) *doo*. Pret. *dide* weak.

**Verb. Subst.** Pres. Ind. *am*, *art*, *is*; *been bee*, rarely *arn*. Conj. *bee*; *been bee*. Imp. *bee*; *beeth*. Inf. *been bee*. P. Pres. *bēing*. P.P. *been bee*. Pret. *was*, *were*, *was*; *weren were*. Conj. *were*; *weren were*.

**wil.** Pres. Ind. *wil wøl*, *wilt wølt*, *wil wøl*; *wiln wil wøln wøl*. Conj. *wile wølle*. Pret. *wølde*. P.P. *wøld*.

## PRETERITE-PRESENTS.

**198. can.** Pres. Ind. *can*, *canst*, *can*; *connen conne* (*can*). Inf. *connen conne*. Pret. *kouth* *koude*. P.P. *kouth*.

**dar.** Pres. Ind. *dar*, *darst*, *dar*; *dor* (*dar*). Pret. *dorste*.

**thar.** Pres. Ind. *thar*, *tharst*, *thar*; (*thar*).

**shal.** Pres. Ind. *shal*, *shalt*, *shal*; *shullen shuln shul* (*shal*). Pret. *sholde*.

**may.** Pres. Ind. *may*, *might* (*mayst*), *may*; *mowen mowe mow* (*may*). Pres. Conj. *mowe*. Pret. *mighte*.

**moot.** Pres. Ind. *moot*, *moost*, *moot*; *mooten moote moot*. Pres. Conj. *moote*. Pret. *moste*.



**woot.** Pres. Ind. *wōot, wōost, wōot*; *witen wite* (*wōot*). Pres. Conj. *wite*. Imp. *wite*. Inf. *witen wite*. Part. Pres. *witinge*. Pret. *wiste*. P.P. *wist*.

**owe.** Pres. Ind. *owe, owest, oweth*. Pret. *oughte*.

The forms in brackets are the result of analogy. They are, in the main, instances of levelling out of the Plural in favour of the Sing., and we may note that it is chiefly the 2nd. Pers. Pl. for which a Sing. form is used: *ye wōot, ye may*.

## II. THE SUBSTANTIVE.

### 199. I. Vocalic Stems.

(a) **O.E. Masc. Nouns.** The ending of the Nom. Sing., to which the Acc. Sing. corresponds, is

(1) Consonantal in the case of the *o*-stems: *arm, borugh borw* (Troil. I. 1038), *cherl, doom, dreeȝm, fissh, mouth, ȝoth, ring, wal, wolf; staf, whal; heven, fowel foul, thonder, hamer* etc., likewise in the case of the long-syllabled or polysyllabic *i*- and *u*-stems: *gest, thurst, stench, heȝth; feeld, somer, winter* etc.

(2) Vocalic by the M.E. resolution of an O.E. consonant, as in the case of the *o*-stems *day, wey*, the long *wo*-stem *snow* etc. Noteworthy is *peny* (O.E. *penig*).

(3) Vocalic by the loss or resolution of a consonant in the O.E. period, as in the case of the *o*-stem *shoo*.

(4) Weak *e*, corresponding to O.E. *-e* in the long *jō*-stems: *ende, herde (hierde), leeche, mellere, rydere* etc., as well as in the short *i*-stems: *bite, mete, stede, lye*, to which should be added the words in *-shipe*, as *freendshipe, lordshipe* etc.; corresponding to O.E. *-u* in the



short *u*-stems *sone*, *wode*. Weak *e* becomes final by the apocope of *n* in *mōrwe* (O.E. *morgen*).

(5) Inorganic weak *e* in the *jo*-stems which have become long in consequence of the West Germanic consonant gemination, whenever the O.E. Nominative ended in *cj*: *wegge* (O.E. *wecj*).

NOTE. *weye* is used beside *wey*, and, apparently, more frequently; Orm already uses *wegge*. *Bōtme* is the rule instead of *bōtm*; apparently also *stalle* for *stal*, *tere* for *tēer*. Amongst words in *-ere*, *wongeer* has lost the final *e*, and the preceding *ē* is closed, so that a confusion with the O.Fr. suffix *-ier* seems to have taken place.

200. The Gen. Sg. ends in *-es* or *-s*: *cherles*, *Gōddes*, *kinges*, *lōrdes*, *fingres* etc., *dayes* (*shoos*); *sones*.

NOTE 1. Assuming the Nom. as stem, the rule is to add *-es* to the words ending in a consonant, as well as to those mentioned in § 199, 2, *-s* to those ending in weak *e*, as well as to those mentioned in § 199, 3.

NOTE 2. By the side of *hevenes* there occur the Genitive forms *hevene*, *heven*, as in O.E. by the side of the Masc. *heofon heofones*, a Fem. *heofon*, also *heofone*, which follows the *n*-inflection.

201. The Dat. Sg. is, as a rule, like the Nom., only a few of the words the Nom. of which ends in a consonant, have retained the old *-e* of the Dative: *bōrwe* (from *bōrwe*), *bōnde*, *flighte* and *flight*, *lōrde*, and probably more frequently *lōrd*, *strōnde*, *tounne* and *toun*.

202. The Pl. of all cases ends in *-es*, or *-s*: *doomes*, *kinges*, *lōrdes*, *fingres*; *dawes dayes* (from *day*, cf. §§ 41, 44); *shoos*; *sones* etc



By the side of *shoos*, *shoon* occurs (already O.E. Gen. Pl. *sceóna*) by analogy with *foón*, *toon* (§ 213). *Peny* has a Pl. *pens*.

**203. I Vocalic Stems. (β) O.E. Neuters.** The ending of the Nom. Sing. to which the Acc. corresponds, is

(1) Consonantal in the long *o*- and *i*-stems: *boon*, *deer*, *fyr*, *good*, *wyf* etc.; *wight*; also in the *ja*-stems which have become long in consequence of the West Germanic consonant gemination: *bed*, *kin* etc., further, in some of the short *o*-stems: *bath (clif)*, *lith*, *ship*, *writ* etc., and in the greater number of the polysyllabic *o*-stems: *heved hefd*, *wepen* etc. Final *n* is apocopated in *even* beside *eve*, *mayden* beside *mayde*, invariably in *game*.

(2) Vocalic by M.E. resolution of an O.E. consonant: *straw* (beside *stree*).

(3) Vocalic by loss or resolution of a consonant in the O.E. period: *fee*, *wo*; *tree*, *knee*, *stree* (beside *straw*).

(4) Vocalic, *i.e.* weak *e* corresponding to O.E. *-e* in long *jo*-stems, short *i*-stems: *wyte*, *spere*, and, corresponding to O.E. *u*, short *wo*-stems: *mele* etc.

(5) Weak *e* as the result of analogy in the majority of the short, and in some of the polysyllabic, *o*-stems: *blade*, *cple* (but *colfox*, *colblak*), *dale*, *hole*; *berne*, *welkne* etc. In these cases the form of the O.E. Pl. in *-u* has been determinate. An *e* seems, moreover, to be added to the Nom. of short *wo*-stems with roots ending in a vowel, provided that *w* is resolved in M.E.—not already in O.E.—cf. *hewe* in contradistinction to *tree*, *knee* (on the other hand in long stems, for instance, *straw* beside *stree*).



**204.** The Gen. Sing. ends in *-es* or *-s*, as in the Masc.: *wyves*, *beddes*, *kinnes*, *shippes*; *maydens*; *speres*, etc.

**205.** Traces of a Dat. Sing. in *-e* when the Nom. ends in a consonant: *fyre*, *lyve* (frequently also Instrumental), *lynde*; *bedde*, *wedde* etc. But if rhythm or rime requires it we also find *fyr*, *lyf*, *lynd*, *bed* etc., in the Dat. Similarly *lighte* and *light*, *shiþe* (§ 220) and *ship*.

**206.** The Pl. of the following long *o*-stems is (cf. the Nom. and Acc. in O.E.) like the Sing.: *deer*, *folk*; *hors*, *neft*, *pound*, *sheep*, *swyn*, less consistently *thing*, *yeer*; here belongs also the dissyllabic *winter* (which in O.E. is Masc. in the Sing., Neuter in the Pl.: *wintru*, more frequently *winter*, not until late Masc. *wintras*). As a rule the Pl. ending *-es* or *-s* (originally the ending of the Masc. *o*-stems) prevails for Neut. nouns: *bones*, *fyles*, *goodes*, *wyves*; *beddes*; *clives*, *shippes*; *maydens*; *fees*, *trees*, *knees*, *streps*; *speres*, *cōles*, etc.; also *thinges*, *ye(e)res* beside *thing*, *yeer*.

NOTE. Exceptionally the Pl. of words in *-ee* occurs with the ending *-es*, instead of *-s*. Thus *Blaunche* 266 *fees*, *Troil.* III. 1592, and S.T. 184/1719 [B. 1719] *knees* (in both cases the variant *knowes*) should be scanned as dissyllables; likewise *trees* dissyllabic, *Fame* 752 [Globe, *Fame* ii. 244].

**207. I. Vocalic Stems (γ) O.E. Feminines.** The Nom. Sing. generally ends in weak *-e*. This corresponds to O.E. *-u* in short *ā*-stems: *care*, *love*, *shame*, etc.; in short *wā*-stems like *shade* (beside *shadwe*), in short *u*-stems like *dore*, *nōse*. In long stems it is



due to analogy either with all, or most, of the remaining cases. Examples of the long stems :

(1) *ā*-stems (O.E. Gen. Dat. Acc. in *-e*) *beere, foore, halle, lȝre, sorwe* (but *sorwful*), *throwe, wounde, sowle, shepne, -chestre, strengthe, highte, sighte* (O.E. *jesihð*). The verbal substantives fluctuate between *-inge* and *-ing*. *Fight* is an exception, the inflexion of which was determined by the O.E. Neuter *ȝefeoht*.

(2) *ja*-stems, both those which have become long by assimilation, and the originally long ones : *brigge, egge, fitte, helle, selle*, also the words in *-esse* ; an exception is *hen* ; *blisse, lisse, yerde*.

(3) *wā*-stems : *meede, rewe, trewe*.

(4) *i*-stems (O.E. Gen. and Dat. in *-e*, later frequently also the Accusative) : *dede deede, gleede, neede* ; *bēne, queene* ; *tȳde* ; exceptions : *bench, might, world*.—see ends in an accented vowel.

(5) *u*-stems : *querne*, but *hond*.—*u* is apocopated in *kinrede* (O.E. *cynræden*).

NOTE. The *wā*-stems prove that the Nom. of short-syllabled stems was also formed by analogy in M.E. : O.E. *sceadu*, Gen. Dat. Acc. *sceadwe* and *sceade*, in Chaucer *shade* and *shadwe*.

208. The Gen. Sing. is but scantily represented in this group, which contains numerous Abstract Nouns and some names of inanimate objects. The old form in *-e* appears for instance in *halle, helle, love* in *loveday*. The Gen. in *-es*, for instance in *queenes, worldes, loves* (*love* is Masc. in Chaucer).

209. Dat. in *-e* in a Nom. with consonantal ending occurs in *honde* by the side of which *hond* (O.E. *honda hond*).



210. The Pl. ends in *-es* (or *-s*), cf. *cares, dores, halles, sgrwes, woundes, dreminges, lesinges* etc., *hennes, deedes, gledes, quenes, hondes* etc.

NOTE. *gere* is based on the O.E. Pl. *gearwe*, more accurately perhaps on the Dat. *gearwum gearum*.

211. II. **Consonantal Inflection** (α) *n*-stems. Nom. Sing. O.E. Masc. Nouns: *ape, asse, bonde, housbonde, hunte, moone, name, oxe, teene* etc. *e* has been dropped in *pley*; old contraction in *roo*, here belongs also *fro* (O.E. *ƿefð*, whereas *fáƿ fá* is an Adj.). **Feminines**: *arwe, erthe, herte, quene* (S.T. 576/18) [H. 18], *sonne, swalwe, tonge, widwe* etc., also old loan-words like *almesse, cherche*; *e* is dropped in *lady*; cases of old contraction are *bee, flee, floo, too* etc. Neuters: *ye* 'eye,' etc.

212. Gen. Sing. Amongst the Feminine Nouns characteristic forms occur like *herte* (but also *hertes*, cf. Leg. 519), *sonne, widwe, cherche, lady*. But for the most part the form in *-es*, or *-s*, seems to be the rule for feminine nouns also.

213. Plural in *-en* or *-n*: *oxen, foon* (also *foos*) *pesen*; *asshen* (and *asshes*), *hosen, been* (and *bees*), *fleēn, toon* (and *toos*); *yen*. The form in *-es* or *-s* is the general rule: *housbondes, arwes, tonges, ladyes, eres, roos* etc. It is not clear whether Chaucer wrote *assen* or *asses*, cf. S.T. 342/285 [D. 285].

214. II. (β) Nom. Sing. *foot, tooth, man womman*; *book, goos, goot, oek* (*burgh, turf*), *mous, cow, night; monthe, ale*. Gen. *mannes wommannes*. Dat. *foote*. An old Gen. and Dat. of *burgh* is contained in the form *Canterbury*. Plural: *feet* (but *foot* when



used as a name of measure), *teeth*, *men wommen*, *gees*, *breech* Sing. (O.E. *bróc*), wanting; no evidence for the Pl. of *mous* (and *lous*); *kyn*; *night*; *bookes*, *egges*, *burghes*, *turves*, *monthes* (but *a twelfmonthe*). A Gen. formed by analogy with the Sing. is contained in *mennes*, *wommennes*. A Dat. Pl. *feete* (older M.E. *foote*, O.E. *fōtum*) S.T. 165/1104 [B 1104].

215. II. (γ) *fader*, *broother*, *mooder*, *doughter*, *suster*. Gen. *fader*, but also *fadres*, *broother* apparently also *brōtheres*, *moodres* (also *mooder*?).

Plur. *bretheren*, *doughtren* and *doughtres*, *sustren* and *sustres*.

216. II. (ð) *freend*, *feend*; Gen. *freendes*, *feendes*. Pl. *freendes*, *feendes*.

217. II. (e) *calf*, *lamb lōmb*, Gen. *lambes*, *ey*. No evidence for the Plural in *-r*. Plural *chylde* (in Sire Thopas, which, however, contains many irregularities, also *chylde*: *wylde* S.T. 194/1996 [B. 1996]); Gen. *chyldes*; Pl. *children*.

218. **Germanic Loan-words.** The consonantal or vocalic ending of the Nom. Sing. corresponds, as a rule, to the original form: for instance, in old loan-words: *carl*, *crops*, *crook*, *wōgn*, Mdu. or Lg. *pōt*, Mdu. *calf* 'sura' (orig. 'pulpa'); on the other hand, O.N. *cake*, *felawe*, *windowwe*, Mlg. *crouke*, *drake*, *knarre*, *snoute*, *toute*; Mdu. *crone* (§ 29, ð), *grōte*, *pigge*, Mdu. or Fris. *slinge* etc. But O.N. Feminines with a consonantal ending frequently add *-e*: *boone*, *roote*, *sleyghte*. On the other hand *-e* is dropped in *beer* (Mlg. *büire*), for *Blaunche* 254 should read thus.



Compound *pilwebeer*. Gen. Sing. occurs rarely: *pigges*. Dat. *brinke* (from Dan. *brink*). Pl. *crookes legges*, *felawes*; *pottes* etc.

NOTE. Keltic words: *hog*, Pl. *hogges*, *cloke* (if not from M.Lat. *clocca*, O.Fr. *cloque cloche*, which, however, is itself derived from the Keltic), *gonne* etc. An *e* has been added to *goune* (Gael. *gún*, W. *gun*), *daggere* (W. Bret. *dager*?, but cf. the M.E. verb *daggen*, to the stem of which the suffix *-ere* is added).

**219. Syncope and Apocope.** Words in *-el*, *-er*, *-en*, generally syncopate the *e* of the derivative suffix, whether it be original or irrational, whenever a termination is added: *sowle*, *welkne*, thus *shepne* for *sheepen* and in the MSS. sometimes *wepne* for *wepen*, especially before *-es* of the Gen. Sing. or of the Pl.: *foules*, *figres*, *fadres*, *moodres*, *doughtres*, *sustres*, as well as before *-en*: *doughtren*, *sustren*. But if *v* precedes (probably also *m*, as in *hamer*), the *e* is not suppressed graphically, though it loses its syllabic value; *hevene* beside *heven*, *hevenes*, *develes* (for which it would be preferable to write *deeveles* or *deevles*), thus also after *th* in *brötheres*, *bretheren*. *Mayden* is in the Gen. and Pl., not *maydnes*, but *maydens*.

After an unaccented, but metrically numerable, syllable, weak *e* when final or in the ending *-es* becomes mute, thus by the side of *mellere* (*mellere* is also conceivable) *mëllere*, beside *felawe*: *felawe* (*fëlawushipe*), beside *wommënnes*: *wömmennes*, beside *housbōndes*: *hōtsbōndes*, beside *felawes*: *fëlawes* etc. Graphically the *e* is rarely suppressed in the MSS.: generally *lādyes*, *bōdyes* *bōdięs*, though occasionally *lādys* etc. After a syllable with secondary accent apocope is general, syncope optional: *nēygheboīres*



or *néyghébòrēs*, *lovedayēs*, *massedayēs* 284/4042 [B. 4042].

NOTE. A trisyllabic form *maydenys*, such as occurs Leg. 722 according to the MS. Camb. Univ. Gg. 427, in contradistinction to the other MSS., is certainly not Chaucerian. How the verse could be emended is, however, not apparent.

**220. Final and Medial Consonants.** A final *f* corresponds to a medial *v* (though the usage of some scribes varies in individual cases): *wyf*, *wyves*; *theef*, *theeves*; *staf*, *staves*; *lyf*, *lyves lyve* etc.

A geminated consonant which, when final, would be expressed by a simple consonant is marked graphically when it becomes medial: *wal*, *walles*; *pōt*, *pōttes*.

An originally short consonant is lengthened medially in *Gōddes*, *gōddesse*, *shippes* (but Dat. Sing. *shiþe*, cf. S.T. 101/3540 [A. 3540] beside *ship*), *limmes*.

**221. Romance Substantives.** In cases in which Old French makes a distinction in form between the Nominative and the Accusative, Chaucer—following the early recognizable tendency of Anglo-Norman—generally prefers the form of the Accusative for the Nom. Dat. Acc. Sing. Thus the French *-s* is regularly wanting: *duc*, *mesteer*, *tour*, *flour* (the word *fītz* does not occur in Chaucer so far as I know), and words which shift their accent generally appear in the form one would naturally expect: *emperour*, *citee* etc. Well-known exceptions are *sire*, *tempest*, *Huwe* and—contrary to the French development—*povérte*. In *virgine* Chaucer has adopted the learned French form. It is questionable whether in addition to the



form *aungel*—O.Fr. *ang(e)le*—he is acquainted with the form *aungéle* (O.Fr. *angéle*), cf. § 226 N.

**222.** Vocalic and consonantal terminations occur in the majority of cases corresponding to the O.Fr. Examples: words in weak *e*: *aunte*, *cause*, *chaumbre*, *coroune*, *ese*, *face*, *grace*, *haunche*, *joye*, *melodye*, *nature*, *preye* (praeda), *remembraunce*, *servyse*, *trompe*; *poëte*, *prophète*, *doute*, *freere* etc. Words with consonantal ending: *mesteer*, *squieer*, *prisoneer*, *caas*, *paas*, *deys*, *estaat*, *duc*, *heir*, *peer*, *emperour*, *servaunt*, *argument*, *purpogs*; *flour*, *tour*, *colour*, *favour*, *honour*, *vois*, *pees* etc. Words ending in an accented vowel: *array*, *cry*, *degree*, *see*; *mercy*, *citee*, *plentee*, *cruelte*, *benignitee*, *fey* beside *feyth* etc. It is especially noteworthy that Chaucer marks the gender of words which end in a suffix capable of inflexion (as in *-ain*, *-aine*, *-ier*, *-iere*) by a distinction in form, cf. *chapeleyne* S.T. 5/164 [Prol. 164] *chambereere*—‘chamber-woman’—*tresoreere* ‘female-treasurer’. Unusual is *pcere* (Masc. and Fem.) beside *peer*, cf. S.T. 258/3244 [B. 3244], Purs 11. In *emperyce*, Former Age 55, Mooder of God 2, Chaucer uses the younger O.French form, instead of the older one (*empereis*). In *lazar* (O.Fr. *lazre*, by the side of which *Lazare*) and *aungel* metathesis has taken place, which in other similar cases is occasional and optional.

NOTE. Incidentally attention may be drawn to forms like *quize*, *Ariete*, which may be designated as pseudo-Romance imitations of Latin words.

**223. Apocope of weak *e* takes place:**

(a) Especially after a double consonant or a consonant group. The words *best* and *tempest* have



quite lost their *e*, apparently also *purs*, cf. 19/655, 658 etc. [Prol. 655, 658]; we find, moreover, *fest* beside *feste*, *hoogst* beside *hoogste*, *entente* and *entent*, *presse* and *prees*, *force* and *fors*, *source* and *sours* etc. Some MSS., amongst others Ellesmere and Hengwrt, are in the habit of using the abbreviated forms for *force*, *source* only in rime, but within the metre the full form, even where a monosyllable is required. But cf. for the converse, Harl. 7334, where we find *fors* and *sours*, though not in rime, and likewise *princes*, *sowdanes*, *experiens*, *innocens* beside *princesse*, *sowdanesse*, *experience*, *innocence* etc.

(β) After a simple consonant *-e* is apocopated in *compeer*, also in *physik*, *magyk*, probably also *musyk*, *prenostik*, *pronostik* Fortune 54, in *báner* when the first syllable is accented, generally also in *máner* beside *mánerē* (on the other hand *banéere* *banéere*, *manéere* *manéere*); S.T. 19/650 [Prol. 650] the form *concubyn* seems assured by the concord of the best MSS. After a simple consonant *-e* generally loses its syllabic value, but like the mute *e* in Mod. French (the metre of which is too much fettered by ancient tradition) has left a distinct trace of its original value. This is the reason why words like *face*, *grace*, *place*, *space*, *freere*, *yre* etc. rime in Chaucer only with words of a corresponding termination. Rimes like *plas* = *place*: *solas* S.T. 193/1971 [B. 1971], *gras* = *grace*: *Thopas* S.T. 195/2021 [B. 2021] are characteristic for the ruder art of the minstrels whom Chaucer mimics in Sire Thopas.

(γ) After a preceding vowel *-e* is, as a rule, not suppressed, although it rarely has any syllabic value (cf. *Surrye* 135/173 [B. 173]). Chaucer is specially



wont to discriminate in rime between the endings *-y* and *-ye*, the difference between which may be illustrated by the Mod. French *ami* beside *amie*. A rime like *Gy*: *chivalry* S.T. 197/2089 [B. 2089] is again only conceivable in Sire Thopas. But *-e* regularly blends with a preceding *e* to form one syllable: *contree*, *destinee*, *meynee* (O.Fr. *mesniee*), *perree* (beside *perrye*), *renomee*, are not to be distinguished, so far as the ending goes, from *citee*, *cruelte*, *pitee*. Note further, *abbay*, *journey*; but on the other hand *moneye*, *noble*, *Galgopheye*; *Blaunche* 155 should read *valey* (: *tweye*), instead of *valey* (: *twey*).

After a weak syllable weak *-e* regularly loses its syllabic value: *ndature*, *bataille*, *science*, but it is not suppressed otherwise than in the cases mentioned above.

**224. The Gen. Sing.**, so far as it occurs, ends in *-es* or *-s*: *carpenteeres*, *cherubinnes*, *emperoures*, *senatoures*, *marchauntes* (S.T. 476/2425 [E. 2425] Harl. *marchaundes*), *princes* etc., thus also *Fortunes*. It rarely appears in the form of the Nom. as *heritage* *Pitee* 71, *roze* S.T. 31/1038 [A. 1038], *chaumbre* *Blaunche* 299. *The cors seynt Leonard Fame* 117 (MSS. *Corseynt*, Caxton and Thynne *corps of seynt* or *saynt*) seems to be a case of O.Fr. inflexion.

**225. -es** or *-s* is also the ending of the Plural: *braunes*, *aventures*, *courséeres*, *squidéres*, *officeeres*, *freeres*, *miracles*, *peeples*, *proverbes*, *stables*; *floures*, *toures*, *armes*, *chaumbres*, *creatures*, *daunces*, *duchésses*, *figures*, *flaumes*, *lettres*, *preyées*, *vices* etc. The words in *-ee* have in the Plural monosyllabic *-ees*:



*auctoritees*, *degrees*, *entrees*, *sees*, *subtiltees*, etc.; by the side of *dees* there occurs *dys* S.T. 36/1238 [A. 1238]. Words in *-ay -ey* have as a rule syllabic *-es*: *alayer*, *assayer*, *delayer*, *jayer*, *layer*, *virelayer*, but syncope also occurs, cf. *palfreys*; note also *trays* (= French *traits*). The Plurals in *-yes* like *allyes*, *glotonyes*, *maladyes* do not rime on the ending *-ys*, though the *e* rarely counts as a metrical syllable.

NOTE. S.T. 589/4 [I. 4] the verse seems to require *degreës* instead of *degrees*.

**226.** After an unaccented syllable the *-e* of the ending *-es* is **syncopated**, though it is still frequently written, as in the Plural forms *pilgrimes*, *rtveres*, but, on the other hand, *humeurs*, *pillours*, *lázars*, *caýtifs* rather than *caýtives* (cf. Harl. 7334 for S.T. 27/924 [A. 924]), *áungels* etc. If *t* precedes, *z* is written instead of *s* as in O.Fr. (§ 109d): *státutz*, *márchauntz*, *týrauntz* etc. After a syllable under the secondary accent the syncope of the *e* is optional: *argumentes* and *argumentz*; thus we find with syncopated *e* amongst others the forms *covenauntz*, *dyamauntz*, *payementz*, *penitentz*, *auditours* (S.T. 391/1937 [D. 1937]: *sours*).

NOTE. S.T. 150/642 [B. 642] should apparently read *aungéles* (§ 221). The ordinary form *dungeles* would necessitate an emendation for which there is otherwise no reason. A hint in favour of this unusual accentuation is perhaps to be found in Mooder of God 79. S.T. 130/55 [B. 55] *epísteles* is possibly the reading required instead of *epístles* (cf. Lansdowne and Harl. 7334). A classical affectation on the part of the Man of Lawe would conveniently eke out the verse. Cf. § 294.

**227.** Syncope of *e* in the termination *-es* is impossible when *c*, *ss*, *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *g* or mute + liquid pre-



cedes; hence in words like *circumstaunces*, *jangleresses*, *pilgrimages* etc., the *e* always has syllabic value. A position of the accent in which syncope would become necessary, for instance, *princesses* instead of *princèsses*, is avoided under these circumstances.

Apocope of the final *e* is not interfered with by a preceding sibilant. After mute + liquid *-e* loses its syllabic value when an unaccented syllable precedes, but only in that case: *cónstable*, *mánciple*; in the Pl. only *constábles*, *mançples* would be possible.

**228.** Words in *-aunt* (also in *-ent*?) sometimes take *z* instead of *-es* in the Plural, even when the ending is accented, cf. *aldúntz*, S.T. 62/2148 [A. 2148], and *servdúntz*, S.T. 4/101 [Prol. 101]; cf. further § 259a. Beside the form *orgues* (*orgles*, *organs*) 532/134 [G. 134], a Pl. *orgoon* occurs 284/4041 [B. 4041].

**229.** Words in *-s* remain uninflected: *aas* Pl. *aas*, *caas* Pl. *caas*, *paas* Pl. *paas*, *deys*, *vers* Pl. *vers* etc. This applies also to Proper Names in *-s*: *Eneas*, *Ceys* (Lat. *Cēyx*), *Priamus*, *Troilus*, *Venus*, *Vulcanus*, *Grisildis* etc. are the same in the Genitive as in the Nominative. Good examples are: *the king Priamus sonē of Troye* Troil. I. 2., *Ceys body the king* Blaunche 142. These names only admit of a special form for the Genitive when they are abbreviated, as *Grisildis* *Grisilde* *Grisild*, *Cleopataras* *Cleopatre*, *Antonius* *Antonie*, but the unabbreviated form with its sonorous ending is as a rule preferred.

NOTE. Occasionally a Lat. Gen. occurs as (*domus*) *Dedaly* Fame 1920 [Globe, Fame III. 830]. The form *Nicholay* with its final diphthong is in the Miller's Tale considered equivalent



to *Nicholas*, though only in rime, cf. *Pompey* 136/199 [B. 199]. Petrified Greek Genitives are preserved in *Encidos*, *Metamorphosios* (thus Ellesmere, Hengwrt, other MSS. more correctly *Metamorphoseos*), with retention of the Pl. form *Argonauticon*. Amongst other classic inflexional forms note *Parnaso* or *Pernaso* (mount of P. or on P.), *Lemnon* as well as the Plural forms *Pierides*, *Amadrides* (for *Hamadryades*).

### III. THE ADJECTIVE.

**230.** The termination of the **uninflected Adjective** corresponds as a rule to the O.E. form. Hence consonantal ending in *o*-stems and such as have gone over to the *o*-stems: *blak*, *glad*, *war*, *good*, *gold*, *foul*; *litel*, *muchel*, *evel*, *bitter*, *heethen*, *quik* etc. The West Germanic long *jo*-stems end in weak *-e*: *blythe*, *cleene*, *deere*, *drye*, *keene*, *greene*, *newe*, *sheene*, *sweete* (and *swoote* § 30 β), *softe* (O.E. *sēfte*, but also *sōftum*) etc. Beside *merie* the forms *mery*, *mury*. An O.E. contraction has survived in *free*. We find vocalic ending, in consequence of the M.E. resolution of a consonant, in *grey*, *slow*, *holy*, *worthy*, from the O.N. *sly* etc. Weak *e* in consequence of loss of *n* in the loan-word *fawe* (§ 44 α).

**231.** In rare cases weak *e* has been added to the stem by analogy, as in *bare*, *tame*, *fayr* and *fayre*, *evene*, so also in *lyte* which, in the Sing., is probably only used as a substantive; more frequently in loan-words from O.N., as in *ille*, *lowe*, *meeke*. Short-syllabled English *u*-stems, the O.E. uninflected form of which ends in *-u*, end in Chaucer either in *-w* or in *-we*: *yelw*, *narw* *narwe*, *falwe*. *Hqlwe* (also *hqlw*?) stands for O.E. *holh* which is not explained.



NOTE. The adjectives *badde* (really a Participle), *wikke*, *dronkelewe*, which are new formations, also end in weak *-e*. It is doubtful whether beside *hy* (*high*) *hye* also occurs in an uninflected form.

**232. Strong Inflexion** : Sing. *good*, Pl. *goode* ; *blak*, Pl. *blake* ; *smal*, Pl. *smale* ; *sad*, Pl. *sadde* etc. **Weak Inflexion** : Sing. and Pl. *goode*, *blake*, *smale* etc. Participles inflect in the same manner : *børn børne*, *swørn swørne* ; *dreynt dreynte*.

**233.** The adjective *free* is uninflected, likewise those adjectives which end in weak *-e* (but cf. § 237). Since, moreover, no weak *e* can stand after an unaccented syllable, all dissyllabic paroxytonic adjectives and participles (unless syncope occurs) remain uninflected as *litel*, *bitter*, *cursed*, *wedded* etc.

NOTE. On a foreign form of the Pres. Part. cf. § 191, N. 2.

**234.** Strong inflexion takes place when the Adjective is used predicatively, or attributively without an accompanying Demonstrative or Possessive Pronoun.

The Predicative Adjective may also remain uninflected when it refers to a substantive in the Plural. It is inflected, for instance, in the following cases : *they were seeke* S.T. 1/18 [Prol. 18], *His nqsethirles blake were and wyde* S.T. 16/557 [Prol. 557], *Ful lōnge were his legges* S.T. 17/591 [Prol. 591], *Thise ōlde wommen that been gladly wyse* S.T. 489/376 [F. 376]. But it is uninflected in the following examples : *Nat fully quik nē fully dēd they were* S.T. 30/1015 [A. 1015]; in this case Ellesmere, indeed, reads *quyke, dēde*, so that apocope or slurring of the *e* may possibly have taken place ; but the following example is beyond question : *Of which this ladyes weren*



*nothing glad* (S.T. 415/375 [E. 375], cf. Harl. 7334), where the shortness of the *a* in *glad* (: *bad, clad*) proves the uninflected form. Hence cases like *they were as fayn* S.T. 77/2707 [A. 2707] etc. must be construed in the same manner.

The Participle used predicatively remains as a rule uninflected: *they were adrad, were aferd, were hurt, were kept, been maad, been born, been went* etc. But in exceptional cases the inflected form also occurs: *sin they been thus ymette* S.T. 165/1115 [B. 1115], *thilke that unbrende were Fame* 173.

**235. Weak Inflexion** takes place when the Adjective is used as an attribute accompanied by a Possessive or Demonstrative Pronoun (including the Def. Article), or when it occurs in the Vocative: *the yonge sonne, this ilke monk, hereȝ hȝte love, my sworne broother; leeve broother, o stronge God*. But if the Adjective follows the Substantive accompanied by the Pronoun (Article) without the repetition of Pronoun or Article it remains uninflected: *on the morwe gray* Mars i. (but, on the other hand: *til that the god Mercurius hous the slye* S.T. 489/672 [F. 672]). Nor is an *e* added when the Adjective follows the Substantive in the Vocative: *Now lady bright*. Used as a substantival Neuter it remains uninflected: *the greȝt*.

NOTE. A petrified Vocative seems to occur in cases like and '*goode fayre Whyt*' *she heet*, Blaunche 948. Ought the epithet '*goode leef*' which the Host in the Canterbury Tales S.T. 253/3084 [B. 3084] applies to his wife to be similarly explained? (Ellesmere without regard to the metre: *good life*.)

**236.** Apocope of the inflexional *-e*, from con-



siderations of metre or rime, occurs in the Sing. of the weak inflexion: *thy grēt beauty, o good Custaunce* S.T. 155/817 [B. 817] etc. Even in accurate MSS. this apocope is, of course, often wanting. Apocope hardly ever occurs in the Pl. of the Adj. used attributively, whether the inflexion be weak or strong; never if the Adj. precedes; cf., however, § 261. Some adjectival Pronouns are treated otherwise, cf. Section V. of this chapter.

**237.** The stem-formative *-e* in adjectives like *cleene, trewe* etc. loses its syllabic value only when the inflexional *-e* of adjectives capable of inflexion admits of apocope, or when such adjectives remain uninflected. But in point of fact this rarely happens (except in cases of elision, slurring etc.).

**238.** A strong Gen. Pl. is preserved in *aller*, cf. § 255. Only in the Pl. occur *fefe, fewe*.

NOTE. O.E. *fela* is indeclinable, and almost invariably used as a Neut. Sing. Subst. combined with a dependent Genitive, rarely as an Adj.

**239. French adjectives when uninflected** generally retain their original termination: *apert, desirous, excellent, fals, fiers, gentil, hastyf, maat, parfyt, precious, veyn; blew, coy, gay, hardy, eschu; able, agreable, chaste, double, riche, tendre, possible* etc. The Part. due (O.Fr. *deü*) has acquired an *e*. Latin formations with Romance endings: *desolaat, fortunaat* etc.; *armipotente* (Ital. influence?), *mansuete*.

**240.** The final *e* becomes mute more readily in the case of Romance adjectives than of English ones. It is regularly dropped in *honest*, and in adjectives in



-yk, as *fantastyk*, *malencolyk*. Furthermore the weak *e* becomes mute when the preceding syllable loses the accent entirely, and in this case it is even slurred after mute + liquid.

**241.** The strong and weak inflexions respectively are used exactly as in the case of native words: *This false juge, O fierse god of armes, diverse freeres, Diverse men diverse thinges seyden*, S.T. 136/211 [B. 211], *with teres blewe*. Apocope also takes place under exactly the same conditions—perhaps in proportion somewhat more frequently: *his fals dissimulinge, seynt Cecilie* (Voc.) S.T. 528/28 [G. 28]. Here also paroxytons remain uninflected: *parfit blisses, cruel briddes, subtil clerkes, pttous teres* etc. Proparoxytons, with a secondary accent upon the last syllable may be inflected or remain uninflected: *your excellente doughter, hire excellent beauté*.

**242.** It seems doubtful whether we may correctly speak of a **declension of the French adjective**. The word *seynt* is generally quoted as an example of declension, but if *seynte Marie* occurs anywhere except in the Vocative, we must, on the other hand, remember that possibly *seynte Benedight* and *seynte Petres* occur also: cf. the difficult passage S.T. 100/3483 ff. [A. 3483] and Harl. 7334; perhaps S.T. 20/697 [Prol. 697] should also read *seynte Peter*. It is conceivable that the popular treatment of the adjective was determined by its prevailing use in invocations (in which cases it is not always easy to distinguish Vocative and Nominative, cf. S.T. 380/1604 [D. 1604]); though Chaucer generally observes the rule: *seynt John, seynt Loy, seynt Beneyt* etc. S.T.



64/2240 [A. 2240] we read *nē veyne glorie*, Pitee 17, *with colour ful diverse*; but S.T. 4/122 [Prol. 122] *the servyse divyne*, whilst it is very questionable whether Chaucer considered *servyse* a Fem. noun.

243. Traces of the French Plural of adjectives occur more rarely in Chaucer's poetry than in his prose. The whole of the poetical part of the Canterbury Tales contains only two examples, one of which is, however, specially striking. The Persones Tale alone contains a fairly large number, and not only that part of it which is borrowed from the Somme of Frère Lorens, and which is, apparently, not Chaucer's work.<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon is more frequent in Boethius, the diction of which abounds in Latin and Romance elements.

The French Plural is most easily accounted for in the case of French adjectives which follow the noun attributively (especially if the substantive belongs to the Romance portion of the vocabulary): *places delitables* S.T. 505/900 [F. 899], *noumbres proporcionables* Boece 2428; *weyes espirituels* S.T. 573/79 [I. 79], *goodes temporeles* or *temporels* S.T. 646/685 [I. 685], *thinges espirituels* S.T. 655/784 [I. 784], 787 (in the former passage the original runs: *les choses espiritex*, Eilers, Erz. des Pfarrers, p. 28), [Ch. Soc. Publ. Essays on Ch., v.]. The case becomes more striking when the adjective precedes its substantive: *in the sovereyns devynes substaunces* Boece 4403 (orig. *supernis divinisque substantiis*). But the effect produced is foreign in the extreme when the adjective forms part of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Eilers, Die Erzählung des Pfarrers in Chaucer's Canterbury Geschichten (Erlangen 1882) Magdeburg [Chaucer Soc. Publ. Essays on Ch., Part v.].



predicate: S.T. 650/730 [I. 730] *the travailles that been convenable*, but Harl. renders the passage: *that been convenables* (correctly?); the form is confirmed by rime 195/2038 [B. 2038] *that been roiales*. In the familiar passage 152/711 [B. 711] *Swich manere necessities as been plesinges*, the last word ought perhaps to be construed as a substantive, not as a participle. In any case, the line is metrically suspicious. With substantival force: *the gentils*.

**244. Comparison.** The Comparative suffix is *-er*, the Superlative suffix *-est*. Lengthening of the single consonant is frequent in comparison, which is accounted for by the O.E. lengthening of the final consonant in a syllable (O.E. Comparative in *-ra* cf. *glædra*; this feature was in M.E. transmitted by the Comparative to the Superlative): *glad gladder gladdest*, *greet gretter grettest*, *hȝot hȝotter hȝottest*. Sometimes, when the word ends in *r*, *-re* is used as the Comparative suffix instead of *-er*: *deere derre* (O.E. *dēore dēorra*) in which case the consonant remains short in the Superlative: *deerest*; but on the other hand *fayr (fayre) fayrer fayrest*, *hy (hygh) hyer hyest*, *holy holier holiest*. The following are mutated in the Comparative and Superlative: *gold, long, strong*; *elder* (used as a Subst. in the Pl. *eldres*), *eldest, lenger lengest; stronger strengest*. Comparative and Superlative without a cognate Positive: [*good*], *better, best*; [*evil*], *werse, werst*; [*muchel muche*], *more, moost meest*; [*litel*], *lasse, leest*. Adjectival Superlatives formed from adverbs or prepositions: *fer, ferrest; neigh, ny, next; fore, first; over, overest*. Formed from Comparative stems of a similar



kind : *utterest*, *upperest*, *hind(e)rest*. An old Superlative in *-ma* is *forme*.

245. French adjectives may be compared in the English way : *richer*, *gentilest*, though in the majority of cases there is no evidence of such comparison, and in the case of trisyllabic and polysyllabic ones, comparison by means of the adverbs *more* and *most* is preferred, a method which is also in use for native words.

246. In the Comparative no inflexion is apparent, since forms in *-er* either cannot take a weak *-e*, or if they do, it becomes mute, whilst forms in *-e* are treated like Positives with the same ending. Beside *more* occurs the form *mo*, originally a substantival Neuter, but in Chaucer generally used as a Pl. Adj., though in some cases its original function is still discernible: *Of maystres hadde he mo than thryes ten* S.T. 17/576 [Prol. 576]. The Superlative is inflected : *the beste*, *the mooste*, *the werste*, *the firste*. In the case of paroxytons the weak *-e* must be elided or apocopated : *hire grétteste goth* S.T. 4/120 [Prol. 120], *the hindreste of our route* S.T. 18/622 [Prol. 622], *his overeste courtepy* S.T. 9/290 [Prol. 290], better with Harl. and Petworth *overest*. Not so in the case of proparoxytons : *the séemlieste man*, *To the uttereste preve of his corage* S.T. 428/787 [E. 787], according to Skeat's emendation. If in dissyllabic Superlatives the accent is shifted, the *e* is also audible : *the fayrreste*, *the hyeste*.

Apocope takes place, however, occasionally in the Superlative, as in the Positive, from considerations of metre.



NOTE. Our scheme does not admit of a discussion of the adverb in this connection. But to supplement the above remarks, the following Comparative forms may be mentioned: *bet better, best* (*wel* serves as Positive); *wers worse, werst*; *more moost*; *lasse leest*; *ser, ferre, ferrest*; *neigh ny, neer, next*; *eer, erst*; *fore, first*. Note, in addition, the following rules: Adverbs formed from adjectives which are still extant add a weak *-e* to the stem if it originally ended in a consonant, whereas the stem ending in final *-e* remains unchanged: *brighte, harde, hye, longe, ylyke yliche, cleene, softe* etc. Excepted are the non-syncopated dissyllabic stems ending in a consonant which necessarily apocopate the weak *-e*. Further exceptions are the compounds in *-ly* (O.N. *ligr*, Adv. *-liga*, which has in many cases taken the place of O.E. *-līc -līce* that survives in *-lich -liche*), in which *-ly* has begun to assume the character of an adverbial suffix. Isolated exceptions: the comparative particles *ful* (*ful wel, ful hard* etc.), which seems to have become separated from the compound (*fulhard*, O.N. *fullhardr*), *fayn*; from the French word-stock: *certeyn, plat, playn*. The uninflected form of the adjective is as a rule used for the Comparative and Superlative: *lenger, grettest, fayrest*. Occasionally *-ly* is added to the Comparative stem: S.T. 21/714 [Prol. 714], *the merierly* (according to three MSS., however, the reading should be *so meri(e)ly*, according to Harl. *ful meriely*). The Superlative not infrequently attracts the weak inflexion of a following adjective or participle: *The gentileste yborn of Lumbardye* S.T. 405/72 [E. 72], cf. Harl. *Seyn that I have the mooste stedefast wyf* 451/1551 [E. 1551], *O firste meeving cruel firmament* 139/295 [B. 295].

#### IV. THE NUMERAL.

247. **Cardinal Numerals.** 1. *qon qq*, the latter form not before vowels; the numeral appears in a weakened form in the Indef. Article *an a*; *qnes* for O.E. *án* in *al qnes* 'all one' S.T. 324/696 [C. 696],



for O.E. *anum* in *for the ones* = *for then ones*; weak inflexion *alone*. 2. *tweyne tweye* (orig. Masc.) and *twq two* (orig. Fem. and Neut.) are used without distinction of gender; the two first-mentioned forms occur principally in rime, and hence generally after their substantive, but also *tweye* and *tweye*. Beside these the form *bothe*. 3 *three*, 4 *fowre*, 5 *fyf fyve*, 6 *six sixe*, 7 *sevene*, 8 *eyghte*, 9 *nyne*, 10 *ten*, 11 *enleven ellevene elevene*, 12 *twelf twelve*, 13 *thretteene*, 14 *fowrteene*, 15 *fifteene*, 18 *eyghteteene*, 19 *nyneteene*, 20 *twenty*, 30 *thritty*, 40 *fowrty* etc., 100 *hundred*, 1000 *thousand*. The forms *fyve*, *sixe*, *twelve*—for *fyf*, *six*, *twelf*—generally appear alone or following their substantive.

248. Romance cardinal numbers like *cink*, *sis* etc. are only used as technical terms.

249. **The Ordinal Numerals**, with the exception of *oother*, inflect weak: *forme firste*, *oother* (beside which the French *seconde*), *thridde*, *ferthe*, *fifte*, *sixe* . . . *tenthe* . . . *threttenthe* etc. There is no evidence for a form like *eightetethe*, such as Skeat assumes Man of Law's Head-Link 5; the form must be *eyghtetenthe*. (The substantive 'tithe' is *tythe*).—*eyghte* and *twentithe*.—*oother* when used as a substantival pronoun has a Gen. *oothres*, Pl. *oothre* (MSS. *othere othre other*).

NOTE. Numeral Adverbs: *ones*, *tweyes*, *thryes*.



## V. THE PRONOUN.

## 250. Personal Pronoun.

First Person.		Second Person.	
Sing. N.	<i>y I, ich, ik.</i>		<i>(thou,)</i>
G.	<i>(myn.)</i>		<i>(thyn.)</i>
D.	<i>me, mee.</i>		<i>thee the.</i>
A.	<i>me, mee.</i>		<i>thee the.</i>
Pl. N.	<i>we, wee.</i>		<i>ye yee.</i>
G.	<i>oure.</i>		<i>youre.</i>
D.	<i>us.</i>		<i>you.</i>
A.	<i>us.</i>		<i>you.</i>
Third Person.			
	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.
Sing. N.	<i>he hee.</i>	<i>hit it.</i>	<i>she shee.</i>
G.	<i>(his.)</i>	<i>(his.)</i>	<i>(hire hir.)</i>
D.	<i>him.</i>	<i>him.</i>	<i>hire hir.</i>
A.	<i>him.</i>	<i>hit it.</i>	<i>hire hir.</i>
For all genders.			
Pl. N.	they.		
G.	<i>here hir.</i>		
D.	<i>hem.</i>		
A.	hem.		

NOTE 1. For the Nom. Sing. of the 1st. Pers. Chaucer generally uses *y* (*I*), more rarely *ich*, the form *ik* only exceptionally as a characteristic provincialism; S.T. 111/3867 [A. 3867] it is used by the Reeve from Norfolk.

NOTE 2. The pronoun *thou* occasionally unites with the preceding verb: *shaltou, wiltou, wogstou, nadstou* = *ne haddest thou* etc.

NOTE 3. Some MSS. (as regards the Canterbury Tales, for instance, Harl. Corpus etc.) distinguish between the Gen. (Dat.



Acc.) Sing. Fem. and the Gen. Pl. of the 3rd. Pers., or the Possessive forms derived from them (with the exception of forms expanded by *s*), in such a manner that for the Sing. Fem. they invariably use *hire hir*, for the Pl. consistently, or at any rate generally, *here her*. Other MSS. (for the C.T., for instance, Ellesmere and Hengwrt) are wont to employ *i-* forms in both cases, others again the *e-* forms even for the Fem. Sing. I do not venture to decide which was Chaucer's own usage. But it is certain that *hire hir* is the only form he employs for the Fem. Sing.

NOTE 4. The forms of the Pers. Pron. *oure, youre, hire, here* never occur as dissyllables.

NOTE 5. The Accusative forms *him, hire hir, hem* are due to analogy with the Dative; O.E., and even older M.E., had separate forms for the Accusative. The 3rd. Pers. Nom. Pl. *they* is based upon O.N. *þeir*; the Nom. Sing. Fem. *she* has so far not been adequately explained.

NOTE 6. The Genitive Sing. forms of all three Persons occur only in functions which permit of their being construed as Possessive Pronouns. The corresponding forms of the Plural need be treated as Genitives only in such phrases as will be mentioned in § 255.

NOTE 7. The 3rd. Pers. Pron. (as well as the 1st. and 2nd. Pers. Prons.) does service in the oblique cases also as a Reflexive Pronoun.

**251. Possessive Pronouns.** Used attributively before the noun: *myn my*; *thyn thy*: *his, his, hire hir*; *oure our*; *youre your*; *here her hire hir*. *Myn* and *thyn* are used before vowels and *h, my* and *thy* before consonants; in the Pl. *myne* and *thyne* occur, but only before an initial vowel: *thyne ydoles* 537/298 [G. 298]. *Hire oure youre here* are never dissyllables. Used attributively after the noun: *myn* Pl. *myne* (cf. S.T. 414/365 [E. 365]; 438/1093 [E. 1093]); (*thyn* Pl. *thyne*); —; *oure*; *youre*; —. Predicatively and absolutely: *myn* Pl. *myne*; *thyn* Pl. *thyne*; *his*,



*heres*; (*oure*) *oures*; *youre* (cf. Leg. 683) generally *youres*; *heres*.

**252. Demonstratives.** *The*, the Def. Art. for all genders in the Sing. and Pl. A survival of the Dat. appears in *for the nōnes* = *for then gnes*. *At* + *the* becomes *atte*; in which connection note, according to Zup. Litt. Zeitg. 1885, col. 609, *atte nale* S.T. 373/1349 [D. 1349] = O.E. *æt þám ealod*.—*That*, with more demonstrative force, also stands adjectivally for all genders, Pl. *tho*. When used substantivally *that* remains what it originally was, a Neut. Sing.—*This*, Pl. *thise* or *thees* (generally spelt *thes*, also *these*) is always monosyllabic.

**253. Interrogatives.** Nom. *whp* *who*, *what*; G. *whps* *whōs*; Dat. *whōm* *whōm*; Acc. *whōm* *whōm*. *what*.—*Which*, Pl. *whiche*, *which*.—*Whether* 'which of two'? (when used as a conjunction often synco-pated *wher*).

**254. Relatives.** *That* for all genders in the Sing. and Pl., but, in point of fact, found only in the Nom. and Accus., or in conjunction with prepositions.—*Which*, Pl. *whiche* *which*, but adjectivally *whiche* with audible *e*: *of whiche two* 30/1013 [A. 1013]; exceptionally *which* may assume the function of the Genitive: *of which vertu* = 'by whose power' S.T. 1/4 [Prol. 4]. Generally speaking *whos* does duty as a relative Genitive, *whom* as a relative Dative. **Compound Relatives**: *that-he*, *that-his*, *that-him* etc., *the which*, Pl. *the whiche*, *the which*, but adjectivally *the whiche* with audible *e*: *the whiche brook* S.T. 113/3923 [A. 3923], *the whiche toun* Leg. 707; *whick that*; *the whick that*.



**Correlatives:** *that that* and simply *that*; *who, what*; *which* Pl. *whiche* *which*; *whether*.

**Indefinite Relatives:** *who that* 'whoever,' *what that* 'whatever,' also simply *what*; *who so, what so*.

**255. Other Pronouns.** *Self* in adjectival function: *thy selve neyghebour*. In conjunction with *my, thy, our, your*, and with *him, hire, hem*, we sometimes find *self*, sometimes *selven selve*, for instance, *myself, myselven myselve*; *hemsself, hemselven hemselve*; these forms are in a large measure due to the confusion of the adjectival use of *self* with the substantival use. *Self* is used substantivally, for instance, in *myself* S.T. 319/175 [D. 175] (where, however, Ellesmere obscures its substantival function). *Ilk*: *the ilke* contracted in *thilke, this ilke*.—*Swich such*, Pl. *swiche swiche* (dissyllabic for instance in *Fame* 35, monosyllabic *Blaunche* 28).—*Ogn*; *noȝn*.—*Any*.—On *oother* cf. § 249.—*Som* Pl. *some*, always monosyllabic whether used substantivally or adjectivally; *somewhat*. *Al* Pl. *alle*, generally apocopated before an article or pronoun with syllabic force. This is, however, not always indicated by the MSS.: *al the wordes, al thy freendes*: exceptionally: *alle the* S.T. 132/118 [B. 118]; in a case like S.T. 7/210 [Prol. 210] the reading *alle thordres fowre* as well as *al the ordres fowre* may be defended; the Plural *alle* has, however, like other Adjectives in the Pl., full syllabic value. A strong Gen. Pl. *aller* occurs in phrases like *oure aller cok, youre aller cost, here aller cappe*, also in *alderbest, alderwerst, alderfirst*. *Aught* *ought*; *naught* *nought*—*eyther* G. *eytheres*; *neyther* G. *neytheres*.—*Eȝch* D. *ȝeche, echȝon, everich every, everichȝon*.—*Many, many ȝon, many a(n)*, Pl. *many*.—*Men me* 'one' indef.



## CHAPTER III.

### STRUCTURE OF THE VERSE AND STANZA.

#### I. PROSODY.

**256. Treatment of weak *e* (§ 61) in the word considered as a unit.** We shall first state the two propositions based upon the law regulating the position of the secondary accent (§ 282), the significance of which has already been indicated in the chapter on Accidence.

I. If each of two consecutive syllables contains a weak *e*, one of these is bound to lose its syllabic value, whether absolutely, by syncope or apocope, or approximately, but in a degree sufficient for the exigencies of accentuation and metre, by slurring. Examples: in the weak Pret. Sing., instead of *werede*, *lovede*, *clepede*, *makede*, *axede*, *longede*, *lookede* etc., *wereðe* or *wered*, *loveðe* or *loved*, *clepte* or *cleped*, *made* or *maked*; *axed*, *longed*, *looked* etc.; in the Pl. instead of *loveden*, *clepeden*, *makeden*, *axeden*, *longeden* etc., *loveðen* (?) or *loved*, *clepten* or *cleped*, *maden* or *maked*, *axed*, *longed* etc.; in the same way, instead of Sing.



*cryede* Pl. *cryeden*: *cryde* or *cryed*, *cryden*; in the nominal inflexion, instead of *faderes*, *hevenes*, *maydenes* etc., *fadres*, *hevenes*, *maydens* etc.; *evere* or *ever* corresponds to E.O. *æfre* etc. Isolated exceptions from the rule occur in the non-syncopated weak Preterite, though it is doubtful whether we find any in the Sing. (cf., for instance, *weddede* S.T. 26/868 [A. 868], where Ellesmere, Hengwrt, Petworth, Lansdowne read *wedded*, and the verse seems to require the complement of a monosyllable), there certainly occur in the Plural: *weyeden*, *yelleden*, *stremeden* etc., cf. § 194. Doubtful is *cristened* for *cristned* S.T. 534/217 [G. 217], cf. § 181.

257. II. After a syllable which, though unaccented, is capable of stress, weak *e* must become mute: apocope, for instance, in *báner*, *máner*, instead of *bánere*, *mánere*, also, though not indicated graphically, in *méllere*, *lóvere*, *náturē*, *bátaille*; slurring, for instance, in *cónstable*, *mánciple*; syncope in *lóvers*, *hóusbondes*, *lddyes* *ladys*, *húmours*, *lázars*, *dungels*, *týrauntz* (§ 226), *pílgrimes*, *rtveres*, *púnissheð* *púnissheð*, better *púnissht* (*púnshed* cf. § 181), *vánissheð*, *rtvisshed* *rtvisshet*, *rtvisshedest* etc. It is due to this rule that paroxytonic adjectives have no inflexion.

Exceptions are very rare: *lángwissheth* 460/1867 [E. 1867], where syncope was not feasible, and only a change of accent would have been possible, *enlumined* A.B.C. 73. Since the *e* of the termination *-es* cannot be syncopated after a preceding sibilant or after mute + liquid, Chaucer avoids an accentuation like *príncesses*, *cónstables*, instead of *príncesses*, *cónstables* § 227.

258. After a syllable with secondary accent weak *e*



may, but need not necessarily, become mute. If it is final it generally retains its value in rime, but within the metre it is, in the majority of cases, probably not syllabic; *outrydère, soudanèssè soudanès*; apparently even after mute + liquid where slurring is possible: *mésurable* (S.T. 13/435 [A. 435] ought probably to be read thus, and hence *diète* be treated as a trisyllable); but *héritage* Pitee 71 as a quadrisyllable. If it is part of the ending *-es* it cannot be syncopated after a sibilant or after mute + liquid (§ 227); in other cases syncope is optional: *émperoures, carpentèeres, argumèntes argumèntz, payemèntz, auditoirs*; *mássedàyes, lovedàyes* etc.

259. With regard to the treatment of weak *e* in final syllables immediately preceded by the syllable with primary stress, a yet more stringent distinction must be drawn between medial and final weak *e*.

**Medial *e*** is rarely syncopated:

(a) Ending *-es*: syncope is usual in the appellation *sires* Pl.; sometimes in Pl. forms like *loveres lovers, answeres, answers* etc., even when the accent is shifted to the second syllable (cf. for instance 542/429 [G. 429]), also in forms like *ydoles colours* etc. even when the accent retains its original position (cf. 537/285 [G. 285]); cf. further §§ 225, 228.

(β) Ending *-est* 2nd. Pers. Sing. Pres. Ind.: *seyst, leyst* beside *seyest, leyst*, rarely *knowest*, Blaunche 137, for *knowest, spekest* 544/492 [G. 492], *leevestou* 534/212 [G. 212]; ending *-est* 2nd. Pers. Sing. of the weak Pret. *woldest* 254/3135 [B. 3135], *haddest*, ib. 3138 [B. 3138], *haddestou* ib. 3136 [B. 3136] etc.; in the majority of cases it is counted as a full



syllable. It is only in pronouns placed after the noun that syncope is more frequent.

(γ) Ending *-eth* 3rd. Pers. Sing. Pres. Ind. cf. § 186; on the shortened form of the Imper. Pl. cf. § 189.

(δ) Ending *-en*: syncope is not infrequent in the strong P.P. *born, shorn, torn, sworn, lorn, stoln, leyn, seyn* 'seen,' invariable in *slayn*, doubtful whether in *given* (263/3425 [B. 3425] *yivēn* or *yivē?*); syncope is more frequent in the Inf. forms *seyn* 'to say,' *han*, in the Pres. Ind. Pl. *seyn* 'they say,' *leyn, han, arn, wiln, woln, schuln*.

(ε) In the ending *-ed* the weak Pret. must be distinguished from the weak P.P. As a Pret. termination *-ed* is derived from *-ede* or *-eden*, and characterises the apocopated, in contradistinction to the syncopated, form; these forms in *-ed* do not admit of syncope; but in some cases, mentioned in the Accidence, the poet has the choice between the apocopated and the syncopated forms. The syncope of the P.P. in *-ed* follows on the whole a strict grammatical rule which need not be repeated in this connection. But the cases in which a syncopated form occurs by the side of one of full syllabic value may be enumerated here: *kythed kid, afered aferd, wept* but *forweeped, raft*, but also *bireved, answered answeʀd, maked maad, clothed clad, cleped clept*; the Romance verbs in *-aye, -eye*, as *payed payd, affrayed affrayd* etc. On the whole syncope (or slurring § 272) is very rare: *lovēd* Blaunche 478, but the Adj. *balled*, which is formed by means of a participial suffix, occurs more than once as a monosyllable. A syncope of the Participle such as would not be



permissible grammatically hardly ever takes place from metrical considerations; but Pitee 91 must read: *and we dispeyred that seeken to your grace*. Cf., however, § 263.

NOTE. Blaunche 115 *yours* is used as a monosyllable; but it is probably permissible to replace it by the more unusual form *voure* (§ 251). Archaic forms may be expected in the works of Chaucer's earlier period; the corrupt, and in many respects modernised, version of Blaunche as transmitted to us accounts for the disappearance of some of them from this poem.

**260. Final weak *e*** often becomes mute immediately after the tonic syllable, and in the following cases it is never syllabic:

(a) In the following forms of the Personal and Possessive Pronouns, provided they do not occur in rime: *hire, oure, youre, here*, which are also spelt *hir, our* etc., *myne, thyne*;

(β) In the Plural forms *thise, some*, in *swiche* (when not adjectival in the Plural), *whiche* (with the same exception, and when not preceded by *the*, § 254), in the Dat. *eeche*;

(γ) In the strong P.P. of verbs with an originally short root, when the *-n* is apocopated: *come, drive, write, stole* etc. (but on the other hand, *comen, driven, writen* are naturally dissyllabic and *stolen* occurs beside *stoln*);

(δ) In the 2nd. Pers. Sing. of the strong Pret.: *bere bare, tooke* etc., with the exception of the verbs belonging to the gradation-series I. A, β (*songe, founde* dissyllabic, *bigonne* trisyllabic, § 193);

(ε) In the forms *were* and *made*<sup>1</sup> not only in the

<sup>1</sup> Where *made* occurs as a dissyllable, either *maked* or *maden* should be read, the latter, for instance, S.T. 2/33 [Prol. 33].



Sing., but also in the Pl. when *-n* is apocopated, and in the same way probably in *wile*, *wite*, and a few other forms ;

(§) In the substantives *sone*, *wone*, in the Dat. *shiþe* (Nom. *ship*), in the Romance words in *ye*, *aye*, *eye* etc. ;

(η) In *before*, *tofore* ; *there*, *heere* beside *the(e)r*, *heer*.

NOTE 1. The *-e* in most of the above-mentioned cases has not lost its value in rime ; cf., for example, the remarks made in § 223γ.

NOTE 2. On such Romance substantives as have once and for all apocopated their *-e* (*best*, *tempest*), or in which it has blended with a preceding vowel, cf. § 223.

261. In the majority of other cases the weak *-e* may either be counted as a metrical syllable, or if necessary be considered mute. If, however, mute + liquid or consonant + *i* precedes, it is necessarily audible : *table*, *miracle* ; *glorie*, *victorie* etc. It is always syllabic in the plural of the adjective used as an attribute, if the latter precedes the substantive. Almost invariably also when it follows, although in this case the MSS.—particularly when elision takes place—not infrequently apocopate it ; but we find, for example, *Blaunche 400 floures fele*. As a rule it is preserved in the Infinitive even after apocope of the *-n* ; only isolated instances of monosyllabic Infinitives like *yive*, *come*, *make*, *shewe shew*, *swere* or dissyllabic ones like *encense* are to be found ; some doubtful cases occur, however, in poems the tradition of which is corrupt. It is frequently mute in the Pres. Ind. and Imper., more rarely in the Pres. Subj., sometimes also in the syncopated forms of the weak



Pret., and in all these cases the Pl. with apocopated *-n* is treated in exactly the same way as the Sing. Thus it may become mute in the Pl. of the strong Pret. after the loss of *-n*, and this circumstance has without question facilitated the not infrequent occurrence of the Sing. for the Pl. (§§ 193, 198). When final in a substantive, *-e* loses its syllabic value more frequently in Romance than in English words; among the latter those especially retain a mute *-e*, the root-syllable of which can only be considered semi-long (*son*e, *won*e, as we have seen, never occur as dissyllables in a verse, *love* is sometimes dissyllabic, sometimes monosyllabic), more rarely those with a lengthened (like *law*e, *tale*), or even originally long, root-syllable (*tyme*, *sonne*, *reeve*). The chapter on the inflexion of the substantive proved, moreover, that some nouns which in the Nom. Sing. owe their *-e* to analogy, may also have a consonantal ending.

**262. Weak *e* between the primary and the secondary accent** generally counts as a syllable in English words (where it is frequently due to analogy), as well as in English derivatives from, or compounds with, foreign elements. Thus in *neyghebour*, *baggepype*, *nosethirles*, *wodecraft*, *pilwebeer*, but, for instance, *yeld*e~~h~~alle, in *morwesong*, *love-dayes*, but *love-knotte*, in *Engelond*, *Orewelle*, *Dertemouth* etc.; in *recchelees*, but *dettelees* (although from Fr. *dette*); in *rekening*, *watering*, *morwening*, by the side of which *morning*; in *boldely*, *hertely*, *kyndely* and *kyndly*, *needely*, *seemely* more rarely *seemly*, but always *seemliest*, *softely*, *trewely*, but also *trewly*, likewise when *-ly* is added to a French adj. in *-e*: *rudely*, *richely*, *solempnely*, *largely*; beside *nathelees* we find *nathelyes*. In fore-



*ward* (*forēword*) the *e* is always mute, and some MSS. write *forward*, just as *forheed* seems to be the correct Chaucerian form. The irrational *e* in *everich* is generally, in *every* probably always, mute. In French words also, an *e* in this position is often syllabic: *arrerage*, *chapeleyne*, *juggement*, *oynement*, *amendement*, *comaundement*, *reverence*, *daungerous*, but *coveṇaunt*, *reṁenaunt* and *reṁenaunt*, *colerik*, *dischevelee*, *pomelee* (*pomeley*), *lecherous* (*likerous*) and *lecherous* (*likerous*), *sovereyn* and *sovereyn*, *suretee* and *surtee* etc. Practical considerations exercise a very considerable influence upon accentuation, for which reason, for instance, only *seemliest*, *likerousnesse*, with syncopated *e* are possible; a word like *sovereynetee* may be pronounced either with five syllables or with three: *soureyntee*; hence also *hostelrye*, *chivalrye*, *bachelrye* etc., regularly appear with syncope, not *chivalerye* etc. An irrational *e* in French words is, as a rule, naturally mute: *bokēleer*, *Christophere*, better *bokleer*, *Cristophre* or *Cristofre*, but we find, for instance, *Aperil*, Troil. iii. 360.

263. **Syncope** of vowels other than weak *e* rarely takes place: *bileven* also *bleven* 'remain,' *bilyve*, generally *blyve*, *erānde* *Blaunche* 134 (O.E. *ērende*, M.E. also *ernde*), *parisshe* S.T. 14/491 [Prol. 491] *vanisshe* 488/328 (?) [F. 328] *perilous* 194/1999 [B. 1999] *posityf* 34/1167 [A. 1167] (? cf. Harl.), but regularly in formations like *amorously*, *naturally* etc., for reasons of accentuation (§ 228); *Antony* Leg. 657, 701; but the majority of these cases had perhaps better be treated as instances of slurring, § 272. Syncope has distinctly taken place in *croune* beside *coroune*, cf. 541/389, [G. 388] and the refrain to



Gentilesse. The word *Jerusalem* never has more than three syllables in Chaucer (which is the general rule in M.E.), but probably he did not syncopate the *u*, as is Orm's usage, but treated it as a consonant: *Jerwsaleem*.

Syncope of consonants with consequent synæresis need be considered here only in so far as Chaucer's dialect contains the full form as well as the shortened one, or in so far as the abbreviation is not expressed graphically. An opportunity has already been taken to mention cases like *heved heed*, *maked(e) made* and *maked maaad* (*kid* beside *kythed*, *clad* beside *clothed*, are not cases of syncope, but of assimilation of the *th* after previous syncope of *e*), *han* beside *have(n)*.

Deserving of mention are further *whether wer*, *outher or*. *Rather*, Blaunche 562, *whider*, Fame 602 [Globe, Fame ii. 94], and similar cases, are instances of slurring of *e* rather than of syncope of the consonant. Monosyllabic are sometimes *ever*, *never* (before a following initial consonant), in which case the pronunciation is more probably *eur neur* than *eer neer* or *ęęr nęęr*. Similarly the form *aunter* (*per aunter*) occurs beside *aventure*. The exclamation *benedicite* is as a rule trisyllabic (*bencite* or *bendcite?*), in an exceptional instance S.T. 52/1785 [A. 1785] quinquesyllabic; *significavit* 19/662 [A. 662] must be pronounced *synficavit*.

NOTE. If beside *Cleopataras* the form *Cleopatras*, or better *Cleopatra* or *Cleopatre* appears, it is, strictly speaking, not the latter which is syncopated, but the former which is extended by interpolation.

**264. Apocope.** Of moment because of its influence on the structure of the verse is the apocope of



a final *-n*, which occurs chiefly in the various inflexional forms of a verb, and frequently involves that of a preceding weak *e*, in other cases at least renders its elision possible. The latter is generally the case in the Infinitive, the former in the strong P.P.—which is however not always capable of apocope—and in the Pl. forms of Finite Verbs, especially of the weak non-synocopated Preterite, the Pl. of which as a rule simply drops the ending *-en*. In cases like *oon oo*, *an a*, *myn my* etc., the apocope of *n* does not affect the number of syllables in the verse, but has an important bearing on hiatus. The same holds good with regard to the apocope of *m* in *fro* from *from*. The apocope of a final *s* in Proper Names is also worthy of consideration: *James Jame*, *Achates Achatee*. It is frequently connected with weakening, or complete disappearance, of the preceding vowel: *Achillès*, *Achille*, *Antónius Antónie* *Antonj*, *Grisildis Grisilde* *Grisild*, cf., on the other hand, *Cleopataras* beside *Cleopatra* *Cleopatre*, *Arcitas* beside *Arcyte* (in Boccaccio *Arcita*).

On the apocope of the ending *-eth* in the Imper. Pl. cf. § 189.

Apart from weak *-e*, which also becomes the medium of abbreviation in the case of the above-mentioned Proper Names, no vowel is readily apocopated. Final *y* may appear as a semi-vowel in the word *Caunterbury* (§ 125a), which accordingly counts either as a quadrisyllable or as a trisyllable in the metre; in other cases only when the following word begins with a vowel.

NOTE. Some prepositions and adverbs take an epithetic (*e*)s in M.E., but frequently the non-expanded forms occur also, so



that the poet has a choice of doublets of varying syllabic value : *ayeyn ayeynes, togeyn togeynes, among amanges, algatę algates* (§ 120 δ), etc. Here belongs also *yourę* beside *youres* as a pronoun used predicatively or absolutely.

**265. Aphæresis.** For the native word-stock the loss of *h* in *hit it* (in *have* only occasionally, in *nath nadde* beside *nhath nhadde*) must be taken into consideration ; and above all that of *w* in *was were, wil wolde, woot wiste*, if *ne* precedes : *ne was* and *nas* etc. (§ 271). Moreover, the poet has a number of doublets at his disposal in consequence of the identity of meaning which some verbs have, or may have, according as they are used in their simple form, or compounded with certain particles (*bi* and *y*) : *bifallen* and *fallen*, *biginnen* and *ginnen* ; *yfynde*, *yknowe*, *ysee*, generally *fynde*, *knowe*, *see* ; P.P. *yclad*, *yclothed*, beside *clad*, *clothed*, *yfallen* beside *fallen* etc. Amongst Romance words aphæresis is more frequent, and produces many doublets : *apothecarie potecarie*, *epistle pistel* (the latter form, however, from O.E. *pistol*), *escapen* more rarely *scapen*, *esquieer* generally *squieer*, *honour onour*, *historie istorie storie*, *dispenden spenden* etc.

**266. Synæresis** scarcely occurs in M.E. in native or Germanic words apart from the case considered above, in which it was preceded by syncope of a consonant. Of course, forms like *lyth* beside *lyeth*, *knowest* beside *knowest* might be considered instances of synæresis rather than of syncope. In Romance words it takes place more frequently, but here synæresis is as a rule an accomplished linguistic fact, and further fluctuation in syllabic value is therefore excluded. Thus, for instance, in *reme* (from *reïame*),



*mene* (*meien*), *seel* (*seiel*), *veel* (*veël*), *preche preeche* (*preëschier*), *emperyce* (*empereïs*), *emperour* (*empereür*), *due* (*deü*), *obeye*, *obeyssaunt*, *obeyssaunce*, *rejoyce*. Note further the synæresis in *Eneyde* Leg. 928 (on the other hand *Fame* I. 378 *Eneïdos*), in *Criseyde*, *Pompey*, *Nicholay*, *Sinay*, in *Creusa* *Fame* 175, 183, and in *Averroys*. Beside *Beneyt* from Anglo-Norm. *Benecit* stands *Benedight* from Lat. *Benedictus*.

**267. Diæresis** occurs exceptionally in *degreës* instead of *degrees*, regularly in Greek words in *-eus*, the diphthong of which is resolved after Romance fashion into *e-u*: *Theseus*, *Morpheus* etc.

NOTE. *Feës*, *Blaunche* 266, for *fees*, may be treated as diæresis. But *kneës* for *knees* should be explained according to § 206 N.

**268. Synizesis** affects chiefly dissyllabic French vowel-combinations which begin with *i* and *u*. Such combinations (which, in discussion, will not be differentiated from the corresponding ones in words which though really Latin are treated after Romance fashion) are as a rule dissyllabic in Chaucer also; cf. *ia* or *iau* in *amiable*, *mariage*, *cerial*, *celestial*, *cordial*, *special*, *licenciaat*, *alliaunce*, *daliaunce*; *ie* in *conscience*, *experience*, *science*, *patient*, *insufficient*, *squieer*, *diète*; *iou* in *absolucioun*, *avisioun*, *commisioun*, *condicioun*, *confessioun*, *conclusioun*, *devocioun*, *discrecioun*, *imaginacioun*, *lamentacioun*, *meditacioun*, *mencioun*, *nacioun*, *operacioun*, *opinioun*, *revelacioun*, *sessioun*, *contrarious*, *curious*, *delicious*, *glorious*, *gracious*, *precious*; *ua* in *perpetual*; *ue* in *cruel*, *textueel*; *uou* in *vertuous*, *tortuous* etc. But synizesis occurs also in trisyllabic and polysyllabic



words, generally within the metre, thus in *condicioun* S.T. 132/99 [B. 99] *questioun* 542/428 [G. 428], *religioun* ib. 427, *avisiouns* Fame 48, *curiours*, *gloriours*, *victoriours*, *phisicien*; thus we read S.T. 491/448 [F. 448] *furial*, Leg. 702 *storial*; *imaginacioun* occurs in rime Blaunche 14. In *famulier* synzesis probably takes place regularly; cf. on this word Tobler Vom französischen Versbau, p. 59 f. Synzesis is necessary when without it the first element of the combination in a polysyllabic word would receive the stress (whether primary or secondary), hence *meridional*; this is particularly evident in words compounded with *-ly*: *specially*, *perpetually*, *patiently*, *curiously*, *deliciously*, *graciously*. In classical and Romance Proper Names the combinations in question are treated as in other words: *Julian*, *Linian*, *Julius*, *Antonius*, but also *Antonius* Leg. 588, generally *Valerian*, but *Valerian* 535/235 [G. 235]; 539/350 [G. 350]; 541/408 [G. 408]; generally *Almachius*, but *Almachius*, e.g. 541/410 [G. 410]. Before a weak *e* post-tonic *i* is necessarily only a semi-vowel: *Antonie*, and thus regularly in words like: *glorie*, *victorie*, *tragédie*, *cárie*, *mdrie*, as also in *berie*, *merie*. Synzesis generally takes place in the Comparative of adjectives in *-y*: *holier*, *besier* etc., but *frendlier*, Troil. i. 885, *lustier* 570/1345 [G. 1345], in which each syllable retains its full value. No synzesis occurs in similar cases in the Superlative, cf. *holiest*, *seemliest* etc. *Seur* (O.Fr. *seür*), which is invariably monosyllabic, may be considered as a further instance of synzesis. Note also *Perotheus* beside more frequent *Perotheus* (= *Pirithoüs*).

**269 Elision.** This term comprehends all the



diverse phenomena which result from the blending into one syllable of the final vowel of one word with the initial vowel of the next. They are principally of two kinds: ecthipsis or apostrophe, and 'synklisis' if a new term be permissible for a process which is comparable to synizesis in a single word. Actual crasis is rare.

**Ecthipsis** affects primarily the final weak *e*. This is regularly elided before an initial vowel (on the only case in which elision need not take place, cf. § 270). A few examples must suffice; the ecthipsis of *e* is indicated only in cases where it cannot be apocopated before an initial consonant:

*Wel koude he sitte on hors and fayre ryde* 3/94  
[Prol. 94].

*Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel keepe* 4/130  
[Prol. 130].

*Whan they were wonne and in the grete see* 2/58  
[Prol. 59].

*Thestaat, tharray, the nombre and eck the cause*  
21/716 [Prol. 716].

*With muchel glorie and greet solempnitee* 26/870  
[A. 870].

*Victorie and as a conquerour to liven* 27/916  
[A. 916].

*Short was his gowne with sleeves longe and wyde*  
3/93 [Prol. 93].

Frequently, indeed as a rule, weak *e* is also elided before following *h*. This affects in English words chiefly the initial *h* in *he, him, his, hire, here, hem* (in the case of elision it would be preferable to spell *hit* without *h*), *how, heer*, and various forms of the verb



*have*, in Romance words the mute *h* as in *honour*, *honest*, *humble*, *humilitee* etc. Examples :

*His bootes souple his hors in greet estaat* 6/203  
[Prol. 203].

*That hem to seen the peeple hath caught plesaunce*  
434/993 [F. 993].

*To eschue and by hire contrarie hire oppresse* 527/4  
[G. 4].

*Nought wolde I telle how me is wo bigoon* 517/1316  
[F. 1316].

*Of children to thonour of God above* 448/1449  
[E. 1449].

It is noteworthy that the aspirated French *h* also occasionally permits of elision :

*Of brend goold was the caas and eek the harneys*  
83/2896 [A. 2896].

The elision of an *e* finds graphic expression as a rule only in the case of the article *the* and the negation *ne*, and even then it is not always indicated by the scribes : *nis* = *ne is*, *nam* = *ne am*, *nath*, *nadde*, or also *nhath*, *nhadde* ; *thestaat*, *tharray*, *tholde man*, *thonour*, etc. In other cases the elided *e* is, indeed, not infrequently apocopated as : *And floures fressh honouren ye this day*, Mars 3, but as a rule only in such MSS. as often omit even an *e* which is metrically essential.

Closed *e* may be elided as well as weak *e*, though this happens infrequently, and only before an initial vowel, not before *h*. Ecthipsis must be assumed in the following cases : *in the alighte* 182/1660 [B. 1660] (Ellesmere and Hengwrt : *in thalighte*), *do me endyte* 528/32 [G. 32] (Hengwrt :



*do mendite*), *on crueltee me<sup>^</sup>awreke* Pitee 11, *that hadde affrayd me<sup>^</sup>out of my sleep* Blaunche 296. Stedfastnesse 17 ought to be emended: *Pitee<sup>^</sup>is exyled*, *no man merciabile*, either crasis or synklisis having taken place; synklisis probably in *prive<sup>^</sup>and apert* 366/1114 [D. 1114] (Harl. *prive ne<sup>^</sup>apert*. cf. § 270, Note.), *Tisbe<sup>^</sup>and Piramus* Leg. 916. Unaccented *o* is more frequently elided in *to*: *to<sup>^</sup>eschue*, *to<sup>^</sup>entende*, *to<sup>^</sup>abyden*, *to<sup>^</sup>Athenes*, *unto<sup>^</sup>any love<sup>^</sup>re*, Troil. i. 20 etc.; since spellings like *tentende*, *tenforce* etc. also occur, these must be cases of ecthlipsis; synklisis also in a case like *tó Placébo<sup>^</sup>answérde* 450/1520 [E. 1520]; crasis in *so<sup>^</sup>estaatly* 9/281 [Prol. 281]?

Synklisis takes place without doubt when a final *y* unites with a following initial vowel to form one syllable: *so besy<sup>^</sup>a man*, *so mery<sup>^</sup>a* (var. *so myrie<sup>^</sup>a*) *compaignye*; *many<sup>^</sup>a* is united with extraordinary frequency, so that the cases in which the two words taken together form a trisyllable as 136/213 [B. 213] are really exceptions; on the other hand, generally, *many oon*. A case like *they<sup>^</sup>engendred* 21/421 [Prol. 421] may be treated as crasis.

NOTE. For very obvious reasons the final sound in *every* never undergoes synklisis. Nor, as a rule, are adverbs in *-ly*, which are frequently followed by a short pause, adapted to this process. One might be inclined to scan Blaunche 147: *And shéw<sup>^</sup>e hire<sup>^</sup> shórtly<sup>^</sup>it is no ndy*; but the line more probably reads: *And shéw<sup>^</sup>e hire<sup>^</sup> shórtly*, *hit is no ndy*, cf. § 272.

**270. Hiatus** is the converse of elision, and may therefore be appropriately discussed in this connection. Neither Old French nor Modern German poetry acknowledges any rigid law against hiatus, such as Modern French poetry observes. This is true



also of M.E. poetry in general and of Chaucer's verse in particular. He does not hesitate to permit the conjunction of a final with an initial vowel, provided that the former is not weak *e*, but he betrays a tendency to avoid such a juxtaposition whenever it is fairly easy to do so. A careful study of the MSS., even the most reliable specimens of which cannot be credited with an absolutely faithful adherence to the original, will prove that after a final vowel which is not to be elided Chaucer always spelt *hit*—not *it*; before an initial vowel or *h* he regularly used *from*, *oon*, *noon*, *an*, *myn*, *thyn*, and frequently also *-lich* and *-liche* instead of *-ly*, whilst before consonants he used *fro*, *a*, *my*, *thy*, generally also *o* and *no*. Rigidly tabooed is the conjunction of syllabically weak *e* with a following initial vowel. In this connection note further the following three points:

(1) The Article *the* generally unites with a following vowel to form one syllable, but may also maintain its independence: *the ercedeknes curs* 19/655 [Prol. 655] (also l. 658 *Purs is the ercedeknes helle quod he* with Harl.; in no case with Zupitza: *Purs is the ercedekenes helle seyde he*), *the olde clerkes* 34/1163 [A. 1163], *that al the Orient* 43/1493 [A. 1494] (*Orient* here necessarily dissyllabic, cf. § 268), *on the auter cleere* 67/2331 [A. 2331], *on the auter brighte* 69/2425 [A. 2425] etc.

(2) Initial *h* permits, as we have seen, the elision of a preceding weak *e*, but it may, on the other hand, also conceal the hiatus. It is unnecessary to multiply examples: the following will prove that an *e* which is frequently subject to apocope may be syllabic



before following *h*: *Yit hadde he but litel goold in cofre* 9/298 [Prol. 298]. *That on his shine a mormal hadde he* 12/386 [Prol. 386].

(3) Chaucer very rarely permits hiatus after a weak *-e* in the cæsural pause. Most of the examples which have been adduced as evidence in support of his doing so are based on erroneous readings which have become untenable since the publication of the Six-Text. In other cases the emendation is obvious: for instance 39/1322 [A. 1322] read *Withouten doute hit may stonden so*. Yet its occasional occurrence must be conceded. The hiatus jars but little when the cæsural pause coincides with a very distinct logical pause: 468/2144 [E. 2144] should be punctuated as follows—

*Com forth, my whyte spouse. Out of doute  
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, o wyf.*

Nor is the hiatus in the following example objectionable, although it only coincides with a secondary cæsura, and the logical pause is only a brief one:

*In the ende of which an ounce and namore*  
568/1266 [G. 1266].

Here elision would have reduced the energy of the statement. There is no such excuse for 322/599 [C. 599] or 326/772 [C. 772]:

*If that a prince use(th) hasardrye.  
No lenger thanne after deeth they soughte.*

The poet may, of course, have overlooked some imperfect verses, and it is significant that the short fragment of the Cokes Tale contains no less than two examples of this hiatus: 127/4380 [A. 4380];



128/4407 [A. 4407]; 570/1348 [G. 1348] and 405/57 [E. 57] are doubtful. The latter verse may easily be emended with the help of Cambr. Univ. Dd. 4. 24 (cf. the reprint of the *Clerkes Tale*, by W. A. Wright, p. 3):

*Ther is right at the west syde of Itaylle,*

and thus Tyrwhitt also reads. Other cases are 200/2153 [B. 2153]; 282/3989 [B. 3989].

NOTE. Since *ne* (non) and *nē* (neque) are spelt alike in the MSS. and are occasionally confounded by scholars, it may not be superfluous to note that *ne* admits of absolutely no hiatus, whereas it is quite permissible after *nē*: *nē oynement that wolde clense and byte* 18/631 [Prol. 631], *yong nē oold* 89/3110 [A. 3110] etc. On the other hand *nē* (like the pronouns *me*, *thee*) may suffer elision, for instance *Nat Rome for the harm thurgh Hannibal* 'Nor at Rome,' etc. 139/290 [B. 290]. Exactly the same relation holds between O.Fr. *ne* and *né* (= *ni*).

**271. Contraction** is the elision of *e* in the negation *ne*, when accompanied by aphæresis of a consonant in cases where it was the rule already in O.E.: *nas* (O.E. *næs*) = *ne was*, *nere* (O.E. *nære*) = *ne were*, *nil* (O.E. *nylle*) = *ne wil*, *nolde*, O.E. *nolde* = *ne wolde*, *noot* (O.E. *nāt*) = *ne woot*, *niste* (O.E. *nyste*) = *ne wiste*. The same term may be applied to a process in which the aphæresis of a vowel is followed by assimilation to the preceding word. Of this I can only quote one example: *this* = *this is*. 404/56 [E. 56] ought probably to read: *But this the tale which that ye shal heere*; 32/1091 [A. 1091] *We moste endure it, this the short and playn*.

**272. Slurring** is a sort of modified syncope or apocope. The vowel which is slurred does not



disappear entirely, but is reduced to such an extent that, together with the vowel of a preceding or following syllable, it does not exceed the time of one metrical beat. The two syllables occur in one and the same word, in *hevenes*, *deeveles*, *lovede*, *werede*, *cónstable*, *mánciple* etc. Scansions like *bretheren* should probably be included under this heading, unless it were permissible (having regard to *doughtren*, *oothres*, *oothre*) to assume syncope for them; in all probability also scansions like *Antony*, *naturally*, like *rather* and *whider*, but without doubt all the cases where the ending *-ye* in Romance words is used as a monosyllable. Very often the syllables in question belong to two different words. A weak *e* in the final syllable before a single final consonant may be slurred if the following word begins with a vowel, or an *h* capable of elision. Thus we find combinations like *fader of*, *water he* (*ever on*, *ever he* had also better be scanned thus than as *eur on*, *eur he* § 263), *leeve have* and very often *over al*; furthermore *riden in*, *geten him*, *pesen upon* Leg. 648; *candel at*, *lifel asonder*; *overlooked it*, *biloved and*; *Athénes hir* 60/2098 [A. 2098], *Goddess halfe* Blanche 370 and numerous similar ones. Unusual is 197/2087 [B. 2087] *romaunces of prys*, in Sire Thopas, where, however, Harl. reads *romauns*. Some cases admit of a two-fold interpretation, thus *ever on*, *ever he* ought perhaps to be explained as *ever on*, *ever he*; *wered he*, *loved he*, *loved hir* (Preterites) as *werede he* etc. The phonetic effect remains, of course, in either case the same. I have not quoted any instances of slurring in the ending *-eth*, because in the Imper. Pl. the ending admits of apocope, in the 3rd. Sing. Pres.



more frequently of syncope. In all cases where weak *n* can be apocopated it would be better to assume such apocope and consequent elision than slurring, thus in the P.P. of some verbs, and invariably in the Infin. and the Pres. Plur. or Pret. of finite verbs. Read likewise *Jame* and instead of *James* and, since the form *Jame* occurs in rime.

The weak *e* in *ne* and *the* is also slurred when these particles become enclitic to a previous word with vocalic termination: *I ne saugh this jeer so mery a compaignye* 22/764 [Prol. 764] emended according to Harl.; *I ne seye but for this ende this sentence* 166/1139 [B. 1139]; *Or som wight elles; I ne rought who* Blaunche 244; *Me ne lakketh but my deeth and than my bere* Pitee 105 (emended); *natheless* is, after all, a similar instance.

*That is* S.T. 6/180 [Prol. 180], Blaunche 268, as well as *hit is* Blaunche 147 (cf. § 269, N.) must also be treated as examples of slurring. A contraction such as *thats*, *hits* must have left traces in the MSS. though, on the other hand, it is obvious how easily the scribes could resolve *this* = *this is* (§ 271) into its component parts. Combinations like *with a*, *and a*, *in the* appear to me to be very doubtful; for the present I should prefer to consider them non-Chaucerian.

## II. ACCENT AND STRESS.

**273.** Since the rhythm of Chaucer's verse is determined by accent, the metrical stress is necessarily based on the word- and sentence-accent. But not infrequently the normal word-accent and the



metrical rhythm are at variance, and different opinions are possible and have been actually held as to the manner in which the conflict may be decided. The sentence-stress disagrees less frequently with the rhythmical stress—a fact which offers a valuable hint for the solution of the difficulty with regard to word-stress.

274. There are altogether three methods conceivable for the reconciliation of accent and rhythm when at variance: either the accent must yield to the exigencies of the verse—accent-shift; or the rhythm must conform to the normal accentuation—inversion of the metrical measure; or, finally, in delivery a compromise must be attempted of such a character that the hearer remains conscious both of the natural accentuation and of the claims of the rhythm—level stress—veiled rhythm.

275. If in studying a metrical art inherited from the past we seek for criteria which may render it possible in any given case to decide without bias in favour of one of these three methods, the following considerations naturally present themselves. The corresponding syllables of different words often vary in weight—that is in capacity for stress; the second syllable in a word, like *mellere* for instance, is distinctly more capable of stress than the second syllable of a word like *fader*. On the other hand, different parts of one and the same metrical line vary in the demands they make upon accuracy of rhythm; for instance, an investigation of modern versification amongst various nations teaches us that the conclusion of a verse requires under all circumstances rhythmical correctness and is characterised by it ~



even in the syllabically accented metres of Romance nations (also we might add in the ancient poetry of the Indians which is measured by syllabic quantity), whilst on the other hand, the beginning of a verse even in the rhythmically accented metres of the Germanic peoples, permits deviation from the correct rhythmical scheme, or at least a veiling of it.

Starting from these preliminary considerations we arrive at the following conclusions :

(1) Where in case of conflict between accent and metrical stress the syllabic character of the word has been considered exclusively, whilst its metrical position has been disregarded, the accent should be shifted. Now since a word like *mellere*, even at the end of a verse, is capable of filling out such a portion of a rhythmical scheme as may be illustrated thus :  $\equiv \text{—} (\text{—})$ , the inevitable conclusion is that in this and all cases in which the metre imperatively demands it, the accentuation *mellère* must be assumed, *i.e.* accent-shift. This assumption receives the most gratifying confirmation from the rules laid down above on the treatment of weak *e*, according to which the form *melleres*, for instance, can only be treated as a trisyllable when the medial syllable is accented.

(2) When in case of conflict between accentuation and metrical stress merely the metrical position of the word can be pleaded in justification, inversion of the metrical measure must be assumed.

(3) When both metrical position and syllabic weight conduce to the solution of the difficulty, or, in an unfavourable case, both are equally indifferent, level stress, or veiled rhythm, must be assumed.



But, in point of fact, inversion of the measure can be dispensed with altogether in an accentual verse of the second type. For since the portion of the verse in question makes the conflict between accentuation and rhythm bearable by the very fact that it preserves the consciousness of the rhythmical scheme, it will, in all cases in which it is possible to assume inversion of the measure, be equally possible to assume veiled rhythm—level stress. A regard for economy in terminology makes the assumption of only two categories advisable: namely, of accent-shift and level stress.

**276.** We shall be guided by these principles in the further discussion of our subject. Our immediate task is the study of word-accentuation by means of a consideration of the position of the primary accent, or of the accent in general (1) in native and Germanic, (2) in Romance words.

**277.** In considering the **accentuation of the Germanic word** it is necessary to discuss first the normal position of the primary accent, then the legitimate conditions for shifting it. The normal position of the accent corresponds to the O.E. rule.

(1) In the simple word the accent rests upon the root-syllable in contradistinction to the inflexional or derivative syllables: *fáder, móoder, fínger, héven, sádel, rýdere, lóvere, bódy, wóorthy, thénken, áskedest, wrýting, hólier, hjýeste, séemlieste* etc.

(2) In noun-composition the principal accent rests upon the first element, whose function it is to determine the force of the second: *plówman, shírreve, còkerwold, wódecraft, nótheed, mánhood, fríendshiþe,*



*freedom, wisdom, worthily, boldly* (-ly originally a noun). This applies even when the first element is a particle (exceptions § 278): *answers, foreward, forward, forheed* (instead of *foreheed*), *upright, outrydere*.

(3) In verb-composition, which by this very fact is proved to be unreal, the accent does not fall upon the initial particle, but upon the verb: *arjsen, biclappen, biginnen, forgéten, forbéeden, forbéren, of-thinken, tohéwen, yséen, ythinken, ybóren* etc.

### 278. Exceptions:

(1) None in simple words.

(2) In noun-composition: compounds with *al*: *almighty* etc.; with *mis*: *misdeed, mishap*; with *un*: *unhap, unhéele, unréste, uncóuth, unháppy, unkýnde, unmighty, unsád* etc.; with *for* ('German *ver*' not to be confounded with *fore* 'fore'): *forgetfulness* from an extinct noun *forgét*; with *y* (O.E. *je-*): *ywts*; compounds with *a* which are formed by analogy with corresponding verb-compounds: *abbod* from *abýden*, even in old formations like *ariste* the particle may have lost the accent in spite of O.E. *érlst*; the case of *bi* (*forby*) is almost identical, the old genuine noun-compounds with *bí*—excepting *býword* (O.E. *bíwyrde*, Mhg. *bíwort*)—have all been lost, and younger O.E., as well as M.E., formations with *be- bi-* are in use: *bihálf, bihéeste, bíleve* etc. Finally nouns in *-ere* denoting the agent follow the accentuation of the verb from which they are derived, cf. *overcómere* Boece 4266.

(3) In O.E. the denominatives are excepted: cf. *ándswarian*; but in Chaucer *answers* is generally



accented like other verb-compounds: *answére*, but also *ánsweŕe*.

**279. Legitimate shifting of the accent for the sake of the metre** occurs primarily in rime, and secondly in the cæsura, without being prohibited in other parts of the verse, since its purpose is to be subservient to metrical exigencies. It consists in the following: In a noun-compound the second element may be accented instead of the first, provided that it or its root-syllable follows immediately upon the originally tonic syllable: *answére*, *forhéed*, *upríght*, *upríste*, *brimstóon*, *manhóod*, *freendshtípe*, *trewlý* (*tréwlý* beside *tréwely*), *oonlý* etc. Amongst loan-words note O.N. *feláwe* beside *félawe* (but only *félawshípe*), *wíndówe*. In the simple word a heavy derivative suffix may be accented instead of the root-syllable, provided it follows immediately upon the latter. Such suffixes are: *-ere*, *-esse*, *-esse*, the Superlative suffix *-este*, *-ing* *-inge*, *-y*: *mellére*, *daggére*; *clennesse*, *gladnésse*; *goddése*; *hyése*, *fayréste*; *lordíng*; *making*, *wrytíng*, *bytíng*, *weepíng*; *bodý*. It is noteworthy that the suffix *-y* in rime is either weak, or bears merely the secondary accent: *bódy*, *únworthý*. Of inflexional suffixes only the isolated *-om* in *whýlóm* *whýlóm* can be in question. Verb-compounds admit of no accent-shift from metrical considerations (*ánsweŕe* beside *answére* is otherwise accounted for, cf. § 278, 3, on the verbal substantive cf. § 281). In a noun-compound the second element of which is usually accented (cf. § 278, 2) the accent is very rarely shifted to the first element; but *úncouth*, *únworthy* occur.



NOTE. If the second element of a compound has suffered mutilation to such an extent as to be unrecognisable, the remainder is treated as if it were the suffix of a simple word : hence *lady* can be accented *ladý*.

**280. Parathesis** is the union of two (or several) originally separate words which as regards their syntactical functions—and inflexion where such takes place—were co-ordinate. The parathetic compounds which were created in the M.E. period are accented according to the O.E. (by no means the M.E.) sentence-stress, provided the latter does not offend against the laws of composition-stress. Hence in a union of two nouns the former will normally bear the accent : *sónday*, *hólyday* (in the MSS. sometimes spelt as two words), *góodman*, *góod-wyf*, *lóng-swerd* 192/1943 [B. 1943], *Óxenford*, *Cáunterbury* etc. The same holds good when two particles belonging to the same part of speech are united : *élleswhere*, *álsó* ; but with a legitimate shift *alsó*. If a preposition is united with a noun or with an adverb, the noun or adverb will bear the accent : *alýve*, *bilyve* *blyve* ; *bifóre*, *bihýnde*, *tofóre*, *withóuten* etc. The preposition used as an adverb before another preposition bears the accent : *ínto*, *únto* (§ 58 N.), but also *intó*, *untó* and probably always *upón* (frequently spelt *up on*). The pronominal adverb before a preposition used as an adverb is originally unaccented : *heertn*, *therefóre*, *thereóf*, but also *thérfore*, *thérof* (*thér of*) etc.

If the O.E. sentence-stress is at variance with the composition-stress, the latter prevails. The preposition used as an adverb, as well as the ordinary prepositional adverb, bears the accent in O.E. if it stands



before the verb: *fōre seon, up ahebban, uppe bringan*. If the particle enters into a closer union with the verb it loses its accent in M.E. by analogy with the older verb-compounds (which, as a matter of fact, are also unreal compounds): *And Arcita anbon his hōnd uphāf* (MSS. *up haf*) 69/2428. *For also sboth as sōnne uprist on mōrwe* (MSS. *up rist*, Var. *rist up*), Troil. IV. 1443, likewise *uprōos* Troil. I. 85. *But whāt that Gōd forwōot moot nēedes bēe* 294/4424 [B. 4424], likewise *forwōot* Fame 45. *By hýgh imágind-cidun forncast* (Var. *form cast*, *for cast* etc.) 294/4407 [B. 4407] *Sireþ Thopas wolde outryde* (MSS. *out ryde*) 192/1940 [B. 1940]. Participial forms: *up-fōstred* 531/122 [G. 122], *up-hólde* 533/189 [G. 189]. Beside these, however, cases are found in which the particle retains its tone: *That fōr woot dī withouten ignordunce* Troil. IV. 1071; *Up roos the sōnne and up roos Emelye* 65/2273 [A. 2273] (where at the beginning of the verse we must assume level stress); but in such instances there is no necessity for assuming parathesis, and in the former of the two passages quoted we should be justified in replacing *fōr* by *fōre* in order to indicate the independence of the particle. However, the accented particle generally follows the verb in M.E., or is separated from it by another word; the latter is the case, for instance, in *To live with hire and dye and by hire stonde* 140/345 [B. 345], *And out she comth* Leg. 858; the former in *Tisbe rist up* Leg. 887. In *She rist hire up* Leg. 810, the particle both follows the verb and is separated from it by another word. The noun has in O.E. a stronger stress than the verb, as a rule even when it follows the latter. In those M.E.



instances of parathesis which one feels inclined to construe as Imperative sentences, the initial verb bears the accent by analogy with genuine noun-compounds: *þikeþurs*, *trédefoul* etc.

**281. The Verbal Substantives** in *-ing -inge*, when compounded with a particle, are often accented otherwise than the verb from which they are derived: not only in cases like *fórseeing*, *fórwiting*, *i.e.* in compounds which by no means necessarily presuppose the parathesis of particle and verb (any more than the German '*Thürsteher*' postulates a verb '*thürstehen*'), but also in cases like *biginning*, *i.e.* in a noun-compound, which is probably derived immediately from the corresponding verb-compound. Side by side with this form there occurs, however, one with the accent corresponding to that of the verb: *biginning*. Occasionally the Pres. Part. also has noun-accentuation; *this fórknowinge wyse* Troil. I. 79.

**282.** As regards the position of the **secondary accent** two frequently antagonistic tendencies may be recognised in the language of the 14th. century, the historical source of which must be discussed elsewhere: on the one hand a tendency to accentuate the second element of a compound felt as such, and consequently to emphasise a living derivative suffix by the accent; on the other hand a tendency to bring about a regular alternation of accented and unaccented syllables in a word. In Chaucer's poetry—as in that of all poets who aim more or less consistently at a regular alternation of accented and unaccented syllables—the latter tendency is, in case of conflict, destined to prevail, the former only



attains to indirect expression in their work, namely, in so far as it tends to account for the possibility of shifting the primary accent. The position of the principal accent once given—whether it be the normal or an exceptional one—that of the secondary accent follows in Chaucer as a matter of course. Words like *wisdom*, *mánhood*, *fréndshipe*, *hýest* have no secondary accent, but, on the other hand *mártirdóm*, *wómanhóod*, *máidenhêed*, *félawshípe*, *séemliést*; cf. further *arýsen*, *for géten* with *óvercómén*, *únderstónden*, *fórheed* with *óutrydère*, *unwórtthy* with *únwórtthy*, *bíginning* with *bíginning*, *fórseeíng*, *fórwít-íng* etc.

A weak *e* is apocopated, syncopated or slurred whenever the secondary accent would fall upon it; but sometimes the necessity for this is obviated by the syncope or slurring of a weak *e* belonging to a preceding syllable. On this relation are based the propositions discussed in §§ 256, 257.

It is further noteworthy that the *e* of the 2nd. Pers. Sing. termination *-est* is not weak, since it is capable of secondary accent: *áskedèst*, *nóbledèst* etc. In isolated cases the *-en* of the non-syncopated weak Preterites, and much more rarely the *-eth* of the 3rd. Pers. Sing. Pres. Ind., and the *-ed* of the P.P., bear the secondary accent. Cf. §§ 256, 257, exceptions. The Comparative suffix *-er* rarely bears the secondary accent, as *fréndlièr* (Var. *frendliour*), Troil. I. 885, *lústièr* 570/1345 [G. 1345]. As a rule synynthesis takes place in such cases (cf. § 268).

NOTE. On a case like *epístelès* for *epístles* cf. § 226 N.; on occasional accentuation of a weak *e* in foreign Proper Names § 294.



**283. Accentuation of Romance words.** In French the accent rests, as we know, upon the last syllable of the word which is capable of accent, hence either upon the ultimate, or upon the penultimate, if the ultimate contain weak *e*. In M.E. the treatment of French nouns differs from that of French verbs with regard to accentuation, and they must therefore be considered separately.

**284. The French noun** often retains its original accent in Chaucer. This statement can be proved only in the case of dissyllabic words, or trisyllabic ones with a weak *e* in the final syllable. Instances of accentuation like *pitte*, *honour*, *vertu*, *nature*, *manere*, *victorie*, *contrarie* are frequent in Chaucer, and (with very rare exceptions : *remedye* beside *remédie*, *vicary* beside *vicarie*) the only permissible ones in rime. But the accentuation corresponding to N.E. usage is very frequent within the metre : *pitte*, *honour*, *vertu*, *nature*, *maner* etc. In words like *victorie*, *contrarie*, *historie* this accentuation seems limited to cases in which the final *e* may be elided, since it is incapable of secondary accent, whereas the preceding semi-vowel can neither disappear absolutely nor be easily transformed into a full vowel ; hence *victorie* and 26/872 [A. 872] *contrarie* hire 527/4 [G. 4]. On the other hand, there is no objection to accenting *constable*, *manciple*, cf. further § 227.

**285.** A number of nouns of the character indicated do not in any case admit of the recession of the accent from the second to the first syllable. This applies especially to nouns the first syllable of which contains a parasitic *e* before impure *s*, as for instance



*estaat*, and to a large number of compounds the first element of which is a particle. The prefixes *a(ad)* and *de* resist accentuation to an extraordinary degree, e.g. *abet*, *achaat*, *accord*, *apert*, *array*, *arest*, *assent*, *assyse*, *avys*, *avow*, *awayt*; *debaat*, *deceyte*, *decree*, *defence*, *degree*, *delyt*, *delyvre*, *desyr*, *despeyr*, *despyt*, *devout*. But *Blaunche* 384 *défauté* seems to occur. Other particles like *dis-* *di-* are more fluctuating: probably always *disése* *dispórt* (etymologically *deldy* also belongs here), but on the other hand cf. *discreet* beside *discréet*; others again, like *abs-* *con-* betray no perceptible aversion to the accent. No conclusion as to M.E. pronunciation can be drawn from direct comparison with N.E.: thus *renoun* occurs in Chaucer by the side of *renbun* (M.E. *discrete* fluctuated in accent, and in this case also the pronunciation *discréte* has become established).

286. In polysyllabic words there is a tendency to throw the accent two syllables further back, in short to reverse the positions of the primary and secondary accents (the position of the latter is the same in Romance as in native words): *emperdour* for *emperbúr*, *argument* *argument*, in the same way, *soveréynetée*, *condición*, *imagindición*, *obeydunce*. To what extent this process had been accomplished in Chaucer's language cannot be wholly determined from the metre, since both the primary and the secondary accents are capable of metrical stress. But that the process was not unknown may be deduced from cases of syncope like *auditours* for *auditoures*, which necessarily postulate an accentuation *aúditouirs* (§ 226), further from a few cases in which in synizesis the accentuation of the word in its full



syllabic value has been preserved: *condicioun of poverte* 132/99 [B. 99] *religioun* 542/427 [G. 427] (in rime synizesis naturally produces accent-shift, hence *imāginaciūn*, but Blaunche 14 *imāginaciūn*, or rather *imāginaciūn* ?), finally, in cases of synæresis like *dunter* beside *dventüre*. Whether, conversely, from the occasionally syllabic force of a weak final *e* in words like *aventure* we ought to conclude that in such cases the primary accent maintains its position, must be left an open question. In further discussion I shall venture to assume that Chaucer's normal method of accentuation was to reverse the respective positions of the primary and secondary accents in French words the structure of which made it permissible. Weak *e* is incapable of accent, hence *souvereynete* occurs beside *souvereynetee*, nor, presumably, was the first element accented in the combinations *ia*, *io* etc. (§ 268), unless such a combination constituted the first syllable of the word), hence *merlōnāl*.

287. The M.E. accentuation of Romance derivatives ignores, as a rule, the M.E. accentuation of the original Romance word; thus we accent *dēlitāble*, *dēsirūs*, in spite of *delýt*, *desýr*, and in the same way *āceptāble*, *dēceyvāble* in spite of *accēpten*, *decēyven*; but Venus 68 the accentuation *agrēable* occurs by analogy with the verb *agrēēn*, and in *achātour* 17/568 [A. 568] the influence of the noun *achāt* is evident, since no M.E. *achaten* corresponds to the French verb *acater* *acheter* from which the noun denoting the agent is derived. On the participial formations in *-aunt* cf. § 291.

Considerations of Romance composition hardly



affect the accentuation (apart from the case mentioned § 285) unless an unaccented English particle occurs side by side with a Romance one of similar form and meaning, thus *immortal* Troil. I. 103, and elsewhere; on the other hand, *impossible*, naturally also *innocent*, since there is no such word as *nocent*; thus *mischdunce* is the normal accentuation in Chaucer as nowadays, but, again, *mlscheef* beside *mischéef*, since *cheef* alone has not the force of the compound. Note further *prenóstik* Fortune 54, and more frequently *advocat* instead of *advocat*—other Romance compounds are accented according to the general rule; by the side of *pitous* or *pítous* we find *déspitòus*; on *despitously* cf. § 288.

288. Amongst the English derivatives from original Romance words those in *-nesse* are of primary importance; *falsnesse*, with legitimate accent-shift *falsnèsse*, *rúdenèsse*, *stráungenèsse*; in polysyllabic words an endeavour is made to secure the secondary accent for *-nesse*: *foolhárdynèsse*.

On the composition of English nouns and particles with Romance nouns note the following. Only those English words which are generally unaccented in composition appear as the first element in compounds: *almérciable*; *unáble*, *unréprovable*. When the English word forms the second element in a compound it is apt to receive the secondary accent: *préntishòod*, *pítously*, *déspitously*. *Estáatly*, *devóutly* are accented thus on account of *estáat*, *devóut*, but there are no instances of *ámoròusly*, *cúriòusly*, but rather with slurring or synizesis *ámorously*, *náturállly*; *cúriòusly*, *páciently*, *spéciállly*, cf. §§ 263, 268.



289. In Chaucer the **French verb** is generally accented like the strong forms of the Romance Present. This statement was fully substantiated in §§ 177, 178, and in the same connection the most important exceptions from the rule were mentioned. The latter, in point of fact, only betray a tendency to carry out the principle deduced from the rule more consistently than is done in French. There is little to add to the remarks made in the paragraphs quoted above.

290. Such verbs as are compounded with a dissyllabic nominal stem probably reversed the respective positions of the primary and secondary accents in Chaucer, hence probably *múltiplýe*, *jústifye*; possibly this is also the case when the verb is compounded with a dissyllabic particle, as *countrefete*. Other instances of unusual accentuation are *disstímuleth* 543/466 [G. 466], *púrfileð* 6/193 [Prol. 193].

291. The Pres. Part. in *-aunt* is, when used substantivally always, and when used adjectivally usually, accented like the ordinary Romance noun: *rémendaunt*, *serváunt* *sérvaunt*, *trencháunt* *trénchaunt*, *súffisaunt*, *répentaunt*; but in the latter case verbal accentuation also occurs: *accórdaunt* 2/37 [Prol. 37], *discórdaunt*, *conséntaunt* 310/276 [C. 276] (Var. *consented*), *recréaunt* Troil. I. 814.

292. The Verbal noun in *-ing*, *-inge* derived from Romance verbs frequently shifts its accent if the verbal theme is monosyllabic: *armíng*, *prechíng*, *offríng*. In case of a polysyllabic theme the ending *-ing* is apt to acquire the secondary stress, the



frequent result of which is a deviation of the primary accent from the position it occupies in the inflected forms of the verb: *apparaillinge, chálanging, chástisinge, complayning, désiringe, énbibing, góverning, purchasing, sérmoning* etc. A similar deviation takes place, though far more rarely, in the case of the Participle in *-inge, -ing*: *ambling apértening*. In by far the majority of cases the participle has the accent of the verb; but naturally *imágining* etc. § 178.

**293. Latin words** in a Romance form, as, for instance, *creaat, desolaat* are treated exactly like genuine Romance words. Latin words which have been adopted without change retain as a rule their original form, but words that are practically formulas and occur frequently, seem to allow a shifting of the accent without which, for instance, the familiar syncope in *ben(ed)cite* would be unaccountable.

**294. Foreign Proper Names**, especially those of classic origin, display many peculiarities of accentuation. The original accentuation of names like *Julius, Ercules, Scithero Cithero* (= *Cicero*), *Troilus, Scithia* corresponds to the usual M.E. pronunciation of polysyllabic Romance nouns, and hence they retain as a rule the original accent; but the form *Priámus* occurs beside *Priamus* Troil. I. 2, Fame 159 (or, in this case, *Priám* ?), beside *Perótheus* also *Pérothéus* and *Pérothéus*. Paroxytons with a sonorous ending are apt to shift the accent. Dissyllabic ones are accented after the French fashion when they occur in rime, in any other position more rarely so: *Tisbéé, Circés, Cypris, Cleó, Ekkó, Erró, Junó, Plató, Venús*. Polysyllabic ones are frequently, indeed as a rule,



transformed into proparoxytons: *Áchatès Áchatèe*, *Áchillès*, *Áchisès*, but *Anchises*, Fame 171, *Pollmitès* (= *Polynices*), *Éneàs*, but *Enéas*, cf. Fame 165, 175, *Vulcaniùs*, *Médeà*, *Ladómia*, (= *Laodamia*) etc., thus we find beside *Apóllo*: *Ápollò* (in rime) beside *Pernáso*: *Pérnasò* (in rime), and even beside *Placébo*: *Plácebò* (likewise in rime). The names in *-eüs* = *eus* are naturally accented thus: *Théseüs*, *Égeüs* etc., but we find, for instance, *Morphéüs* beside *Mórpheüs*. Amongst names which derived their form from Boccaccio, note *Arcýta* and *Arcità*, as well as *Crtseydà*, Troil. I. 169.

Weak *e* in the final syllable favours accentuation of the penultimate: *Achille*, *Antónie*, *Arcýte*, *Criséyde* (the ordinary form of the name), *Elýe*, *Enéyde* (beside *Enéidòs*) *Isiphýle* (beside *Istphile*), *Ovýde*, *Stáce*, or of the one before the antepenultimate: *Gánimède*, *Émelýe* (in Boccaccio *Emília*), *Ísàye* etc., but, as a rule, it is *Virgile* although *Virgýle* Leg. 924. Note further forms like *Ántoný* and *Ántony*, *Cleopátaras*, *Cleopátre*, *Grisildàs* *Gristlde* and *Gristld* etc.

Troilus v. 1486 *Thebés* is peculiarly accented in rime, S.T. 29/973 [B. 973] within the metre probably *Athenès*, as if here the French Pl. ending *-es* were influenced by a reminiscence of Lat. *-as* (cf. *epístelès* § 226, N.). By analogy we should perhaps be justified in reading S.T. 405/63 [E. 63] and similar cases *Sálucès*. The ordinary accentuation of these words is naturally *Thébes*, *Athénès*, *Sáluces*.

295. An investigation of the M.E. sentence-stress would form part of a general discussion of M.E.



metre, or of a sketch of alliterative poetry in the M.E. period. Chaucer's verse contributes nothing to the solution of the most important problems, as indeed no metre can do which is incapable of indicating what words in a given series extending over several syllables are of primary importance for the rhythm of the sentence. Both the primary and the secondary accent are in Chaucer capable of metrical stress. As a rule, all dissyllabic words have one metrical stress, the trisyllabic ones either one or two, according to the position of the principal accent. Monosyllabic words are generally metrically unstressed, though the great majority of them are capable of stress. Exceptions are *the*, *ne* 'not,' and perhaps *an* *a*. A studious sifting of the cases in which monosyllables, though as a rule unaccented in a sentence (prepositions, conjunctions etc.) may bear the metrical stress, would hardly serve any useful purpose for the reason that Chaucer's verse does not reflect all the more delicate shades of sentence-stress, any more than for instance NE. or Nhg. metre does, and because any safe conclusions which might be arrived at in this direction are for the greater part self-evident.

### III. THE VARIOUS FORMS OF VERSE AND THEIR STRUCTURE.

**296.** Only two amongst the various forms of verse employed by Chaucer can lay claim to any considerable and independent importance. They may conveniently, and without fear of misapprehension, be denoted by the terms 'normal short line' and



'heroic metre.' The former will be considered first and a characterisation of it will be followed by a survey of other short lines which Chaucer uses in one single specimen of his work in conjunction with the normal line. A discussion of heroic metre in which Chaucer wrote the great majority of his poems, and amongst them his masterpieces, will form the conclusion.

**297. The normal short line** was transmitted to Chaucer by the older poetry of the M.E. period, and its history reaches back into the 12th century. It must be regarded as an imitation of the Romance octosyllabic verse, though, on its first appearance in English poetry, it does not withstand the influence of a closely related native verse-form, *i.e.* the 'original short line' (Proverbs of Alfred, King Horn). Chaucer's structure of the normal short line differs in no essential point from that of the more distinguished of his predecessors. But cf. § 317.

**298. The normal short line contains 4 beats.** The last beat may either ( $\alpha$ ) conclude the line; or ( $\beta$ ) it may be followed by one unaccented syllable; or ( $\gamma$ ) by two unaccented syllables, the former of which is slurred. Examples:

- ( $\alpha$ ) *This king wol wénden over sée*      Blaunche 67.  
*This lady thát was láft at hóom*      „      77.  
*Swíck a lést andón me toók*      „      273.  
*Why thát is án avísioun*      Fame 7.  
*As hé thát wéery wás forgó*      „      115.  
*Náked flétinge in a sée*      „      133.  
( $\beta$ ) *Withóuten sléepe and bée in sórwe* Blaunche 21.  
*And in this bók were wríten fábles*      „      52.



- Bórd nē mán nē nóthing elles* Blaunche 74.  
*That lýth ful pále and nóthing ródý* " 143.  
 (γ) *Tó my wlt what cáuseth swévenes* Fame 3 ff.  
*Éither on mórwes or on évenes.*

The verse-endings in (β) and (γ) are essentially the same.

299. Between every two stressed syllables, or beats (thesis, 'Hebung'), there is invariably an unstressed or weak element (arsis, 'Senkung'). The first stress is, as a rule, preceded by an anacrusis ('Auftakt'), so that in its complete form the rhythm of the verse is iambic. The anacrusis may, however, be suppressed. A few examples will suffice:

- Bíd him créepe into the bódý* Blaunche 144.  
*Swích a lést anón me tók* " 273.  
*Tók my hór's and fórtþ I wénte* " 357.  
*Gó we fáste and gán to rýde* " 371.  
*Évery mán díde ríght anón* " 373.  
*Cáuseth swíche drémes ófte* Fame 35.  
*Bé so párfít ás men fýnde* " 44.  
*Túrne us évery dréem to góod* " 58.  
*Métte I trówe stédfastlý* " 61.

NOTE. The assertion that there is invariably an arsis between two stresses will seem untenable to an over-credulous reader of the 'Deeth of Blaunche' or the 'Hous of Fame' in their present form. But the extant versions of these poems in particular are corrupt to a degree such as, in the absence of more reliable and independent evidence, justifies a more radical criticism than the general condition of Chaucer's poems requires or warrants. Many passages call for incisive treatment, but even when dealing tentatively with others a memory of the prevailing characteristics of the poet will save the commentator from



imputing to the author the sins of ignorant copyists. One example, for many, may serve to illustrate the point in question: *Nē trēe nē nought that ought wds, Bēst nē mán nē nought elles* Blaunche 158 f. emend: *Nē trēe nē nothing that ought wds, Bēst nē mán nē nothing elles.*

300. The arsis is, from a metrical point of view, always monosyllabic; in other words, anapæstic or trochaic rhythm is foreign to the metre. Nor does dissyllabic anacrusis occur. The chapter on prosody showed us by what means the poet could, under certain circumstances, reduce two syllables to one. We may remember that by syncope, synæresis and synizesis an absolute monosyllable may be produced, by slurring an approximate one (§ 272).

NOTE. The MSS. afford—especially in the Deeth of Blaunche—several verses which only violent slurring could reduce to the correct number of syllables, *i.e.* which contain a dissyllabic arsis. But the majority may easily be emended, as was in some cases done already in Urry's edition. An examination of them will show that the metrical error was not infrequently caused by the insertion of a gloss into the text, for instance, a Proper Name was added to the appellative employed by the poet (also the reverse), or a Substantive took the place of a Personal Pronoun, or a dissyllabic synonym of a monosyllable. The practical conclusions to be derived from such observations will be drawn with the less hesitation, because otherwise consistency would force us to let verses stand which are too long by a whole foot. (*e.g.* instead of *Now for to speke of Alcione his wyf*, Blaunche 76, read: *Now for to speken of his wyf*; *So whan this lady koude heere no word*, Blaunche 101, read: *So whan she koude heere no word*). A dissyllabic arsis should be removed from Blaunche 136: *Go bēt quod Júnō to Mórphēús*, by inserting the Pronoun *she* for the Proper Name *juno*; Blaunche 213 by changing *Allás* to *A!*; Blaunche 264, by deleting *queene*. A fertile source of dissyllabic arsis is a habit of the scribes of repeating a word used in one clause of the sentence in a corresponding clause where it



should only be supplied mentally. Two striking instances of identical character, taken from the *Hous of Fame*, will serve to illustrate our meaning; the interpolated word is in brackets:

*Why thát is an avisioun*  
*And (why) thís a révelacioun* Fame 7 f.  
*Why thís a fántome (why) thíse oracles* Fame 11.

Schipper (*Metrik* p. 281) does not object to the dissyllabic arsis in Chaucer, or—to speak more accurately—he considers every species of slurring permissible. He quotes as an instance in point ‘proving considerable skill’ *Blaunche* 87. *For him alas! she loved alder best.* It is evident that the *e* in *loved* might be slurred with the following vowel, but I fail to see how and with what word *she* could also be slurred. The verse as it stands seems to be the welding together of two variants. *For him she loved alder best* and *For him alas she loved best.* *Blaunche* 95. Schipper causes *sorowe* to be slurred, but the only Chaucerian forms are *sorwe* and (with apocope of *e*) *sorw*.

301. **Level stress** occurs especially at the beginning of a line: *Cer'tes I nll never éte bréed*, *Blaunche* 92. *Ra'ther than thát I shólde déye*, ib. 240. *Now' for to spéken of his wyf* ib. 76 (cf. § 300 N.). *Down' to his hért to máke him wárm* ib. 491. *Hoom' for it wás a lónge térme* ib. 79 etc. It occurs with the next greatest degree of frequency at the beginning of the second half of the line, if immediately after the second stress a sort of cæsure falls: *And why thefféct|fol'weth of sóme* Fame 5. *With flóures féle|fayr' under féet* *Blaunche* 400. *Right' as it wás|wo'ned to dáo* ib. 150, which, however, may possibly be emended to: *Right' as it wóned wás to dáo*. More rarely it occurs in the second foot if a sort of cæsure falls after the first (cf. Note): *Than pléye|éither at chésse or tábles* 51, which, however, possibly ought to read: *Than pléyen éither at chésse or tábles*.



NOTE. In Germanic metre it is customary to count the first foot as beginning with the first beat. This is a mistake, for the metrical anacrusis (even when suppressed) claims a rhythmical period as much as any other arsis, and it is a mere convention that in music a bar is always considered to begin with a beat. Whether the rhythm of a verse is trochaic or iambic, cannot be decided *a priori* even in Germanic metre. The M.E. normal short line which indirectly at least (through the medium of the French *vers octosyllabe*) traces back to the iambic dimeter, and is perhaps directly descended from it, is naturally defined as an iambic metre, in which, however, the anacrusis is sometimes replaced by a pause.

**302.** In addition to the cases of level stress, which, from the point of view of Germanic metre, might appear legitimate, there occur—though infrequently in Chaucer—others of greater importance, which can be accounted for by the persistent influence of the Romance system of metre (as, on the other hand, the absence of the anacrusis is due to the influence of originally Germanic metrical schemes). Only acatalectic verses are in question. For instance: *He wás war of me hów I stóod* Blaunche 515, *Yift that ever he abbóð his lýve* ib. 247, *Of Decembre the ténthe dáy* Fame 111, *I férde the werse ál the mórwe* Blaunche 99. *Fugityf of Troye contrée* Fame 146. *Was in the glásing ywrought thús* Blaunche 327, *Right even a quárter before dáy* ib. 198 etc.

NOTE. A verse like Fame 20: *Forwý this is more than that cáuse is* is less striking, in so far as the accentuation required logically *this is móre than thát* is in some respects of an exceptional character, and we have long since grown accustomed to the fact that an antithesis cannot always attain to rhythmical expression.



**303.** In Sire Thopas Chaucer handles the normal short line as in Blaunche or Fame. Although he permits himself a certain license in the treatment of the rimes after the fashion of the minstrels whose style he is parodying, yet his metre remains free from the crudeness that characterises the work of some of the members of that guild. Only two verses lack smoothness and rhythmical perspicuity. *Whāt eyleth this lōve at mé* S.T. 193/1975 [B. 1975], *Of romaunces that bēen roïdes* 195/2038 [B. 2038].

**304.** Besides the normal short line there occurs in the stanza of Sire Thopas a shorter verse of three beats, and further, in some expanded stanzas, a verse of one beat (cf. § 348). The verse of three beats is iambic and perfectly regular in structure: *Ther āny rām shal stōnde* S.T. 192/1931 [B. 1931]. *Ye bōthe būkke and hāre* 192/1946 [B. 1946]. *For nōw I wōl you rōune* 195/2025 [B. 2025]. *Of Bēves ānd Sir Gý.* 197/2089 [B. 2089]. *And prīked as hē werē wōod* 193/1964 [B. 1964]. Level stress only occurs in legitimate cases: *And slēpe under my gōre* 193/1979 [B. 1979]. In the main body of the stanza the anacrusis is never wanting, though it may be absent when the verse occurs in the *cauda* (Abgesang) of an expanded stanza: *Nēyther wýf nē chýlde* 194/1996 [B. 1996]. *Dwellinge in this plāce* 194/2006 [B. 2006]. The short line of one beat occurs only with a feminine ending: *in tōune, so wýlde, with māce, thy māwe, in lōnde.*

NOTE. A few proverbs transmitted under Chaucer's name (Minor Poems, ed. Furnivall III. 432) have no bearing upon the poet's metre. Other species of short lines occur only in pseudo-Chaucerian poems.



**305. Heroic verse** occurs in older M.E. poetry only in such isolated instances (cf. Note) that to Chaucer would be due the credit of having introduced it into English literature, even if his treatment of it did not differ essentially from that of his predecessors (or predecessor?). Chaucer first made use of this metre in lyric poetry, not until a later period in the epic. The earliest poem in which he employed it, the *Compleynte to Pitee*, was probably composed before the Italian journey of 1372-1373 (I should like to date it 1370-1372), and thus we can hardly escape the conclusion that in the first instance this verse was an imitation of the French *vers décasyllabe*. Yet it was in Italy that he first became thoroughly alive to the significance of this metre. After that Italian journey heroic verse became his sole poetical instrument, destined in the future to be laid aside but twice so far as we know, and in each case for a definite reason, in the *Hous of Fame* and in *Sire Thopas*. Of yet greater significance is the fact that Chaucer's heroic verse deviates in all those points from the French *vers décasyllabe* in which the Italian *endecasillabo* deviates from the common model, and approximates as nearly to the verse of Dante and Boccaccio as Germanic metre can approach Romance. Incidentally we may also note that the heroic verse in the *Compleynte to Pitee* is far more closely allied to the French *vers décasyllabe* than, for instance, in *Troilus* or the *Canterbury Tales*. The free treatment of the cæsure after Italian fashion is far less apparent in the older poems than in the later ones, and anyone who compares the *Compleynte* as transmitted in Harl.



78 with the text of the remaining MSS., and pays greater attention to the point in question than I was able to do in my edition (Essays on Chaucer VI., p. 165 ff. Ch. Soc. Publ.), will perhaps arrive at the conclusion that the extant final version of the poem is based upon an earlier one, in which French treatment of the metre was more distinctly evident, and of which MS. Shirley has preserved some traces.

NOTE. Schipper (Metrik I. p. 436) to whom the credit belongs of having been the first to raise the question as to English heroic verse before Chaucer, mentions as the oldest poems in which it occurs the two songs contained in MS. Harl. 2253: Bøddeker, W.L. XIV., G.L. XVIII. (Wright, Specimens of L.P. No. 41 and 40, also Reliquæ Antiquæ I. 104) where, in his opinion, the fifth and sixth lines of every stanza and the concluding line of the refrain are in this metre. Since, as I pointed out, Engl. Lit. I. 310. Note, the religious song in question is an imitation of the secular one, this two-fold occurrence can only count as a single one. But I have been unable to convince myself that this is a genuine instance of a metre, which—whether in origin or in character—may be identified with Chaucer's heroic verse, though in isolated instances it seems to be an exact equivalent. On the other hand I should like to recognise an imitation of the decasyllabic line in a case where Schipper has overlooked it (cf. Metrik I. 399). In the middle portion of the song, *L'en peut fere et defere* (Wright, Pol. Songs, p. 253 ff., Wülcker's Lesebuch I. 74 ff.), the *cauda* of each strophe ends with three verses which hardly admit of any other interpretation: *For miht is rht/the lōnd is lōwells* etc., but in the corresponding verses of the 4th stanza the last arsis is regularly latent: *For wille is rēd/the lōnd is wrētfūl* etc.

**306.** Chaucer's heroic verse always contains 10 syllables when it has a masculine ending, eleven (or twelve when the eleventh is slurred) when the



ending is feminine. Here again 'syllable' is used in the metrical sense of the term, to which the grammatical definition—at any rate in cases of slurring—approximates, but does not wholly correspond (§ 272, cf. § 300). Examples:

*Ful wel biloved and famulier was he* S.T. 7/215  
[Prol. 215].

*That naturelly wolde holde an oother way* 139/298  
[B. 298].

*This constable whan him lest no lenger seeche*  
146/521 [B. 521].

*Wyð was his parisshe and houses fer asonder*  
14/491 [Prol. 491].

307. Three exceptions from the above rule are, I believe, admitted by some scholars:

(1) Suppression of the anacrusis. Chaucer certainly permits its suppression in the normal short line of four beats; but the inherent difference between this verse and heroic metre ought not to be disregarded. That Chaucer himself was conscious of this difference is proved beyond a doubt in my opinion—which was Tyrwhitt's also—by *Fame* 1094-1098 [Globe *Fame* III. 5-10] (cf. specially *Though som lyne fayle in a syllable*). Personally, when in reading a Chaucerian poem in heroic metre I come upon a verse without anacrusis, I experience a jarring sensation for which I should be loth to make the poet responsible. And the less since a sensible recension of any fairly well transmitted poem will leave but few such cases, and of these some again may be removed by slight emendations. In this connection I may express my regret at not having



supplied the anacrusis in Pitee 16. *Deed as stoon* etc. ought to read '*As deed as stoon*,' which would also be more conformable to the linguistic usage of the poet. Experience proves that especially at the beginning of a line, the more superfluous monosyllables are easily omitted by the scribes.

(2) Dissyllabic anacrusis occurs far less frequently than even suppression of the anacrusis, and should therefore be yet more emphatically repudiated, though for the same reasons. S.T. 8/260 [Prol. 260], for instance, I have no doubt that instead of *With a threedbare cope*: we should read: *With threedbare cope*. If 147/561 [B. 561] *In name of Cryst* were not confirmed by the united authority of Ellesmere, Hengwrt, Camb. and Harl., a scrupulous editor would probably read with Corpus, Petworth, Lansdowne, *In the name of Cryst*. 200/2147 [B. 2147] *comprehended* should be pronounced as a trisyllable = *compreended* (likewise 485/223 [F. 223] *comprehenden* = *comprenden*); in Boece the syncopated form is also in use graphically.

(3) A redundant syllable at the cæsura after the model of the feminine cæsura in the O.Fr. epos occurs without doubt in Lydgate and some later poets. But it is hardly compatible with a metrical system which does not fix the position of the cæsura, and though we do occasionally come upon such passages in Shakespere, we are justified in demanding greater correctness of form from the epic than from the dramatic poet. This *a priori* reasoning is by no means refuted by facts. If we assume apocope, elision and slurring to the same extent at the cæsura as in other positions in the verse (which



we are perfectly justified in doing, as proved above all by the example of Italian verse), only an extremely limited number of verses remain, in which the redundant syllable would have to be removed by emendation.

NOTE.—Some readers of Schipper's *Metrik* would perhaps welcome in this connection an examination of the cases which Schipper I. 415 f. (under the heading 'feminine cæsure after the second beat, so-called epic cæsure') quotes in support of the redundant syllable at the cæsure. I pass over the cases in which the syllable can be gained only at the cost of a hiatus, since Schipper himself considers them doubtful, and my readers, I hope, do not. But here belongs also Prol. 184 *studie||and*, since the preceding semi-vowel certainly protects the final *-e* from apocope (cf. §§ 261 and 284), but by no means from elision (§ 269). Prol. 18 *were* is, of course, monosyllabic. It would be necessary to write *weren* to secure a redundant syllable in *holpen*. Prol. 266 *hadde* should be changed to *had*, as frequently elsewhere; Prol. 193 *e* in *purfiled* is slurred. Prol. 132 the *e* in *curteisye*, as often in similar words, is non-syllabic; 550 *dore* is, as usual, monosyllabic; 740 the best MSS. do not read *woote* but *woot* (§ 198); 22 the *y* of *Caunterbury* is a semi-vowel just as in 16, where it does not occur in the cæsure. 152 there is no reason against reading *Hire nose tretys*, or even, which considering the state of the MSS. might be preferable *Hire nose was streyght*. Monk. T. 3385 and 3409 slurring takes place in the cæsure: *fader^and*, *heven^hath* (or, in the latter case, elision: *hevene^hath*, the elision being in this instance not metrically but linguistically necessary). If we read Prol. 198 with Harl. *and shoon* instead of *that shoon*, slurring must also be assumed in *ballad*, cf. however, § 259. Prol. 148 *But sore wepte she, if oon of hem were deed* looks, judging by the MSS., like an Alexandrine. But if we write *wept she*, or change (for which no adequate reason) with Zupitza to *weep she*, there would be no objection to blending *she* with *if* in one syllable (§ 269). But I suspect that *she* ought simply to be deleted. A verse *But sore wepte, if oon of hem were deed* would be metrically superior



to the one transmitted, and would not be less compatible with the linguistic usage of the poet. These remarks obviously dispose of the cases enumerated by Schipper p. 455; only, with regard to Monk. T. 3413, I should like to add that *song*, even if not followed by a vowel, could not metrically count as a dissyllable.

308. The rhythmical character of the verse is essentially determined by the *cæsura*, which in Chaucer—as in the Italian poets—is moveable. Four species of *cæsura* are of primary importance, two masculine (1 and 3) and two feminine ones (2 and 4).

(1) after the fourth accented syllable :

*And whan that I || by lengthe of certeyn yeres*  
*Hadde ever in oon || a tyme sought to speke, Pitee 8 f.*  
*I fond hir deed | and buried in an herte Pitee 14.*

(2) after the fifth, when the fourth is accented :

*Of his miracles || and his cruel yre Parlement 11.*  
*The day gan faylen || and the derke night*  
*That reveith bestes || from here besynesse Parlement*  
 85 f.

(3) after the sixth accented syllable :

*This sorwful prisioneer || this Palamoun S.T.*  
 32/1070 [A. 1070].  
*As though he stongen were || unto the herte*  
 32/1079 [A. 1079].  
*This Palamoun answerde || and seyde agayn*  
 32/1092 [A. 1092].

(4) after the seventh syllable when the sixth is accented :

*The fayrnesse of that lady || that I see 32/1098*  
 [A. 1098].



*The holy blisful martir' || for to seeke* 1/17  
[Prol. 17].

*The chambres and the stables || weren wyde* 2/28  
[Prol. 28].

Of these four species of metrical section the first is by far the most frequent, and the second occurs more frequently than the third or fourth. The two last are distinctly less represented in poems of the earlier periods than, for instance, in the *Canterbury Tales*.

309. The beat which immediately precedes or follows the cæsure need not coincide with a primary stress, in short, need not be the strongest accent in the section of the verse concluded by the cæsure :

*Of Éngelond || to Caunterbury they wende* 1/16  
[Prol. 16].

*Inspired háth || in every holt and heeth* 1/6 [Prol. 6].  
*As wél in Crístendòm || as heethenesse* 2/49  
[Prol. 49].

*Bút for to tēllen yóu || of his array* 3/73 [Prol. 73].  
*That tóward Cāunterbūry || wolden ryde.* 1/27  
[Prol. 27].

In the feminine cæsure the arsis may consist of an enclitic monosyllable :

*Or if men smóót it || with a yerde smerte* 5/149  
[Prol. 149].

*Ful wóorthy wás he || in his lordes werre* 2/47  
[Prol. 47].

310. The cæsural pause does not necessarily coincide with the most emphatic pause in the sentence. In accentual metre the logical structure of the verse certainly provides a basis for the division of the line, but the harmonious balance between the



two sections of the verse is always carefully considered, and the historical tradition to which Chaucer is linked, and in accordance with which the break is placed as near the middle of the verse as possible, helps to maintain it. Thus in the first verse of *Troilus*:

*The double sorwe || of Troilus to tellen,*

we must certainly place the *cæsura* after the fourth syllable, although the clause into which it cuts only ends with the word *Troilus*. But if the *cæsural* pause which metrically would be most appropriate falls after the sixth or seventh syllable when the sixth is accented, whilst an equally strong, or even stronger, logical pause occurs after the second or third syllable of the verse, it will be legitimate to assume two *cæsuras*:

*With grys || and that the fyñeste || of a lond 6/194*

[Prol. 194].

*Of court || and been̄ estaatlich || of maneere 5/140*

[Prol. 140].

*And palmers || for to seeken || straunge strondes*

1/13 [Prol. 13].

*Somtyme || with the lord || of Palatye 3/65*

[Prol. 65].

*A loviere || and a lusty || bacheleer 3/180 [Prol. 180].*

NOTE. If the logical pause follows the metrical *cæsura* we need not assume a double *cæsura*, for instance:

*And softe unto himself || he seyde: Fy 51/1773 [A. 1773].*

*Is in this large worldē || ysprad, quod she, 182/1644 [B. 1644].*

In refutation of Schipper's diverging interpretation of these verses (*Metrik* I. 457) I should like to point out that even the marks of division in the MSS. confirm my opinion in both cases, whilst where the metrical and logical *cæsura* are at variance, they are generally placed with regard to the latter.



311. Two cæsural pauses are the rule in a verse when none of the principal kinds of cæsure discussed in § 308 occurs. In this case the cæsural stresses generally rest upon the second, and eighth syllables:

*That I || was of here felawshipe || anon* 2/32  
[Prol. 32].

*And heeld || after the newe world || the space* 6/176  
[Prol. 176].

*Of grece || when she drunken hadde || hire draughte* 4/135 [Prol. 135].

*And I seyde || his opinioun || was good* 6/183  
[Prol. 183].

NOTE. This double cæsure also occurs in the Italian *endecasillabo* (which, as a matter of fact, is generally divided in accordance with one of the methods discussed § 308), cf. *Rispose, poiche lagrimar mi vide*, Inf. l. 92; *O musa tu che di caduchi allori* Gerus. Lib. l. 2, 1.

312. The metrical cæsure—as is evident from some of the examples quoted—may even separate closely connected words. But in all such cases it is obligatory that the cæsure should fall upon some word bearing a fairly strong accent (which is not otherwise necessary § 309). If two substantives standing in genitival relationship to each other, or if an adjective and the noun it qualifies are to be separated, a yet further condition must be fulfilled: namely, that the word before which the cæsure occurs should bear more than one stress, as in the examples quoted above:

*The double sorwe || of Troilus to tellen,*  
*A loviere || and a lusty || bachelèr.*

If in the first instance we imagine the name *Ector* instead of *Troilus*, we should certainly divide:

*The double sorwe of Ector || for to tellen.*



Enclitic or proclitic words cannot be separated by the cæsure from the more strongly accented words to which they belong.

313. Extremely rare are the cases in which the verse has a single cæsure, the stress of which rests upon the second syllable. One would at first sight be inclined to divide S/T 8/274 [Prol. 274] as follows:

*His resons || he spak ful solempnely,*  
and Hengwrt divides thus, but Ellesmere on the other hand:

*His résons hé spak || ful sólempnely.*

But a deviation from the logical structure does not seem admissible in a case like the following:

*By forward || and by composicioun* 28/848 [Prol. 848].

In case of a double cæsure it occasionally happens that the cæsural stresses rest upon the first and eighth—instead of the second and eighth syllables:

*Purs || is the ercedéknes hellé || quod hé* 19/658  
[Prol. 658]

*Ginglen || in a whistling wynd || als cleere* 5/170  
[Prol. 170].

NOTE. Schipper p. 458 quotes 24/848 [Prol. 848] amongst the examples of 'obscured cæsure,' assuming the cæsure to fall after the word *and*. But after his arguments on p. 456 f. Schipper was certainly not justified in deviating in this verse from the natural structure of the sentence. The other examples which he quotes in support of 'obscured cæsure' are, with one exception, instances of double cæsure with the cæsural stresses upon the second and sixth, or upon the second and eighth syllables.



The one exception, Prol. 507 (15/507) is a regular case of cæsure after the fourth syllable, and there is no trace of 'obscuration'—not even if we read *He sette not*, or *He sette nat*, since the cæsural stress need not be the strongest accent in the section of the verse concluded by the cæsure (§ 309). But in point of fact we ought, in conformity with Chaucer's custom in such cases, to read with Hengwrt, Corpus, Petworth, Lansdowne, *nought* (*noght*) instead of *nat* (*not*).

314. Though probable, it is not absolutely certain that Chaucer further permitted himself that species of cæsure which sometimes occurs in Provençal and O.Fr. lyrics, namely, a pause after the fourth syllable when the third is accented. Some of the verses which have been transmitted to us in this form permit of a different interpretation, a few others—when correctly read and scanned—seem to be incomplete and without anacrusis. 405/63 [E. 63] we should probably be justified in accenting *And Sálucès* instead of *And Salúces* (§ 294), in the same way, Mars. 5 or Troil. I. 22 might be *But yé lovérs* (§ 259 γ). Defective is for instance 9/294 [Prol. 294], *Twénty bóokes* || *clád in blák or réed*; the reading of Cambridge (*I-clad*) is wholly unsupported, and *clothed* in Harl. would completely efface the iambic character of the line. An emendation seems necessary. Tyrwhitt's conjecture *A twenty bookes* is probably correct (cf. Child in Ellis. E.E.P. p. 372, § 100, N.d.). But undoubted cases appear to be amongst others: *that no drópe* || *ne fille upon hire brest* 4/131 [Prol. 131]. *Three persónes* 539/341 [G. 341], *Kálendèeres* A.B.C. 73.

This cæsure seems to occur sporadically in the Ital. *endecasillabo* also, at least amongst the older poets, cf. Inf. VI. 14 *Con tre góle* || *caninamente*



*latra*; Blanc, Gram. p. 701, indeed treats the verse differently.

**315.** Chaucer's heroic verse is far more decidedly iambic in character than the Italian, indeed so much so that deviations from the iambic scheme (with the exception of the case considered last, if it be proved genuine) may fairly be treated as instances of "level stress." It seems superfluous to quote examples in support of this rule. But the exceptions, *i.e.* the cases in which the rhythm is veiled deserve consideration.

**316. Level stress** occurs primarily at the beginning of a line: *Sheweth untó* Pitee 59, *Under colbur* ib. 66, *Preyen for spéed* Troil. I. 17, *Dwelleth with ús* ib. I. 119, *After hire còurs* ib. I. 140, *After the déeth* Leg. 580, *Régned his quéene*, ib. 582, *Useden thó* Leg. 787, *After the scóle* S.T. 4/125 [Prol. 125], *Maken mortréux* 11/384 [Prol. 384], (read the second part of the verse: *and eek wel bake a pye*), *Lyned with táf fatà* 13/440 [Prol. 440] etc; likewise *Eek on that bother sýdē* Pitee 102, *Thus for your déeth* ib. 118, *Gan for to sýke* Troil. I. 192. *Right for despyt* ib. I. 207, *Bothē of thasséege* ib. I. 464, *Shoop him an hóost* Leg. 625, *Glorie and honóur* Leg. 924, *Trouthē and honóur* S.T. 2/46 [Prol. 46], *Short was his góunē* 3/93 [Prol. 93] etc. It occurs with the next greatest degree of frequency after the cæsure, the position of which is indifferent, provided it is masculine and does not take place after the eighth syllable. A few examples will suffice: *To tellen you* || *al the condicioun* 2/38 [Prol. 38], *And for to festnē his hood* || *under his chin* 6/195 [Prol. 195], *And heeld* || *after the nēwe world* || *the space* 6/176



[Prol. 176] etc. Comparatively rare are the verses in which Chaucer yields more to Romance influence than seems permissible from the standpoint of Germanic metre, by extending level stress to syllables which occur neither at the beginning of the verse nor immediately after the cæsura. If, namely, the second section of the verse consists of 6 syllables it occasionally reveals a structure which—if the rhythmical scheme were framed in accordance with the word- and sentence-stress—might be defined as a combination of two anapæsts (instead of three iambics). Examples:

*Keepeth ay wel | thise corounes, quod he* 535/226  
[G. 226].

*Sin that thou wolt || thyne ydoles despyse* 537/298  
[G. 298].

*O grete God || that parfournest the laude* 187/1797  
[B. 1797].

*For reverence || of his mooder Marye* 189/1880  
[B. 1880].

*Governed is || by Fortunes errour* Fortune 4.

*Ful wel she song || the servyse divyne* 4/122  
[Prol. 122].

*Shal yive it you || as ye han it deserved* 541/390  
[G. 390].

*Everich a word || if it bee in his charge* 21/733  
[Prol. 733].

In this connection we may discuss a few doubtful cases: 528/29 [G. 29] we must read instead of

*And thou that flour || of virgynes art alle*

with Arch. Seld. B. 14:

*And thou that flour art || of virgynes alle.*



A.B.C. 73 *Kalendèeres* || *enlumyned been théy* should be accented *enlūminèd* (§ 257 and 282), since the cæsura of this verse is of such a character as hardly to permit of level stress in the second section of the verse.

The vers *That everich of you* || *shal goon where him leste* 53/1848 [A. 1848] is objectionable in more than one respect. Anyone who considers the context of the passage will admit that direct speech might very well take the place of indirect speech, and would therefore agree to the following change:

*Everich of you* || *shal goon where as him leste*.

Impossible is *And that oother knight highte Palamoon* 30/1014 [A. 1014], a verse which we should least of all expect in Chaucer's child of sorrows, the *Knichtes Tale*. But it is difficult to decide what Chaucer actually may have written, perhaps: *And that bother* || *was cleped Palamoon*, or yet more probably: *That oother knight* || *was cleped Palamoon*. That *highte* was copied by the scribe from the previous line (*Of whiche two Arcyta hight that oon*), whereas most probably Chaucer varied the expression (as in Leg. 724 f.), seems likely.

Chaucer does not seem to treat the six-syllabled section before the cæsura with equal license. For this reason I should now no longer read 12/392 [Prol. 392]—as I did in my edition of the Prologue: *In a gowne of falding* || *(un) to the knée*, but perhaps: *(Clad) in a gowne of falding* || *to the knée*.

**317. Enjambement (Run-on Lines).** The separation of even closely connected elements of a sentence by the conclusion of the metrical line is an



indispensable device for the animation of poetical speech and the avoidance of monotony.

The application of this device lies under a two-fold restriction, but of so slightly defined a character as to be observed only by the delicate tact of a consummate artist. In the first place too frequent a use of enjambement is checked by an instinct that prompts the avoidance of a restless and disjointed style. In the second place the intensity of enjambement is kept within bounds by the consciousness that it must remain possible for the hearer to grasp the verse as a metrical unit, and the sentence as a connected whole. No epic poet has availed himself of enjambement with greater felicity than Chaucer, none has by the most varied and yet measured use of this device, with which the mobility of the *cæsura* is closely allied, been more successful in producing a combination of movement and repose, variety and uniformity. This applies more particularly to his treatment of heroic verse, and above all to the best passages of the *Canterbury Tales*. In the short rimed couplet the poet occasionally displays somewhat excessive boldness in the linking of lines and even couplets by chains of words. But we pardon his temerity the more readily as this metre is especially liable to degenerate into a monotonous jingle, and as it is by means of enjambement that Chaucer has succeeded in so far surpassing the rhythmical art of his predecessors in this metre.

The following observations will be devoted solely to the consideration of the limits in intensity imposed upon enjambement.

**318.** The separation of what is naturally connected



is felt the more intensely, the less material weight belongs to either of the two clauses thus separated. But the poet may effectively counterbalance the lack of material weight by the force of logical weight, as Chaucer, for instance, does in the following case of the word *Fy*:

*And softe unto himself he seyde: Fy  
Upon a lord that wol han no mercy* 51/1773 f.  
[A. 1773].

The same passage affords us an opportunity for yet further comment: if the first clause lacks material weight, the second is so much the heavier, since it extends as far as the metrical cæsura, or even—as the relative clause is an indispensable complement to the word *lord*—fills up the whole of the second verse. But the enjambement is thereby lessened, of which we may easily convince ourselves in the following manner. If we imagine the second verse changed to: *Upon this lord, he wol han no mercy*, and next to: *Upon him, for he wol han no mercy*, we see that the strength of the enjambement increases progressively.

Now, as a rule, the enjambement in Chaucer is somewhat modified by the addition of greater weight either to both elements, or at least to one of the two.

The following means are used amongst others to increase weight: in the case of a substantive or substantival pronoun besides a relative clause—especially a noun in apposition:

*And though that I, unworthy sone of Eve,  
Be sinful, yit accepteth my bileeve* 529/62 f. [G.62],  
or some addition of appositional force:



*That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood  
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde*

39/1330 f. [A. 1330].

or, in the case of the verb, every sort of adverbial definition or adverbial complement denoting direction towards a place :

*But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel  
My thought and seest what harmes that I feel.*

64/2231 f. [A. 2231].

*Sey thus on my behalf (MS. on my halfe) that he  
Go faste into the grete see.* Blaunche 139 f.

In the following examples weight is added both to the verb and to the noun :

*Allas to bidde a woman goon by nighte  
In place there as peril fallen mighte. Leg. 838 f.  
I saugh his sleeves purfyled at the hond  
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond.*

6/193 f. [Prol. 193].

The adverb is occasionally strengthened by a consecutive clause :

*He 'Alma redemptoris' gan to singe  
So loudę that al the place gan to ringe.*

187/1802 f. [B. 1802].

Inversion is a very important means of modifying enjambement, in so far as it separates the elements to be ultimately divided by the conclusion of the verse by the previous insertion of other elements :

*That in hire cuppe nas no ferthing seene  
Of grece, whan she dronken haddę hir draughte.*

4/134 f. [Prol. 134].

*Divided is thy regne, and it shal be  
To Medes and to Perses yiven, quod he.*

263/3424 f. [B. 3424].



*O lord, our lord ! thy name* how merveyllous  
*Is in this large world ysprad, quod she,*

182/1643 f. [B. 1643].

In the last example '*is ysprad*' is a more compact unit than *thy name*, for which reason the words '*in this large worlde*' add to the weight of the second clause as a whole.

319. The significance of inversion for the modification of enjambement brings us to the most important point in the discussion of the question thus raised. Each of the two elements to be separated by the conclusion of the verse must bear a distinct stress. Proclitic or enclitic words must therefore not be separated from the words to which they belong. If in the example quoted above, *Blaunche* 139 f., the first element (*he*) is somewhat too weakly stressed, this is to some extent atoned for by the fact that the dominating accent of the expanded second element rests upon the conclusion of the following line :

*Go faste into the grete sée.*

It is above all important that the accent of the first element should not be obscured by the following one : they must therefore not succeed each other too closely. Hence Chaucer generally observes the rule that when the first clause occurs at the end of a verse, the predominant stress of the second should not fall before the second syllable of the following line. Moreover, cases like the following, in which the second element is an independent word in that position, are extremely rare in his heroic verse :

*But wherfore that I speke al this : nat yóre*  
*Agoon, it happed me for to biholde* Parl. 17 f.



The stress of the second element may only fall upon the first syllable of the verse if it is decidedly weaker than the stress of the first element. Since the second may not be an actually enclitic word, this case again necessitates an inversion of rather unusual character, namely, inversion of the elements to be separated. The following interesting and rare example was procured by emendation. Leg. 858 f. reads, as transmitted :

*And out she cometh and after him gan espyen  
Bothe with hire herte and with hir yen.*

I hope I shall not meet with opposition if I assume that Chaucer must have written :

*And out she cometh, and after him espyen  
Gan bothe with hire herte and with hire yen.*

320. As I remarked above, Chaucer sometimes proceeds with greater boldness in the normal short line than in heroic verse. The Deeth of Blaunche is especially distinguished by the frequency of enjambement, as well as by the energy, not to say harshness, of several of these metrical separations or linguistic combinations. The following examples are all taken from the 290 verses of the Prologue to that poem, from which one example has already been quoted, § 318, and if we wished to include slight instances several more might be mentioned. The cases which most seriously offend against the rule given above will be mentioned last. I venture to quote from the text as emended by myself, but in any instance of considerable deviation from the MSS. I add the variants.



<i>And wel ye woot, ayeynes Kynde Hit were to liven in this wyse.</i>	16 f.
<i>Nat longe tyme to endure Withouten sleepe, and been in sorwe.</i>	20 f.
<i>But men might axe me why soo I may not sleepe, and what me is.</i>	30 f.
<i>My selven can not tellen why The sooth ; but trewly, as I gesse,</i>	34 f.
<i>To tellen shortly, whan that he Was in the see, thus in this wyse,</i>	68 f.
<i>Sende me grace to sleepe and meete In my sleep som certeyne swevene.</i>	118 f.
<i>For as she preyd, right so was doon In deed ; for Juno right anoon . . .</i>	131 f.
<i>This messageer took leewe and wente Upon his wey, and neur ne stente . . .</i>	153 f.
<i>This god of sleep, with his oon ye Cast up, axed<sup>1</sup>: Who clepeth theer ?</i>	184 f.
<i>Anoon this god of sleep abrayd Out of his sleep, and gan to goon . . .</i>	192 f.
<i>And called hire, right as she heet, By name, and sayd : My sweete wyf . . .</i>	200 f.
<i>But, sweete<sup>2</sup> herte, for<sup>3</sup> that ye Burie my body, swich<sup>4</sup> a tyde Ye mowe it fynde the see bisyde.</i>	206 ff.
<i>Swich a lest anoon me took To sleepe that right upon my booke . . .</i>	273 f.

<sup>1</sup> and axed (asked).    <sup>2</sup> good sweete.    <sup>3</sup> for omitted.    <sup>4</sup> for such(e).



<i>And I ne may nē night nē morwe</i>	
<i>Sleepe, and thus<sup>1</sup> melancolye</i>	
<i>And dreed I have for to dye.</i>	22 ff.
<i>Hath wonder that the king ne coom</i>	
<i>Hoom, for it was a longe terme.</i>	78 f.
<i>I ferde the werse al the morwe</i>	
<i>After, to thenken on hire sorwe.</i>	99 f.
<i>And yive me grace my lord to see</i>	
<i>Soone, or wite wher so he bee.</i>	111 f.
<i>I will yive him the alderbeste</i>	
<i>Yift that ever he abood his lyve.</i>	246 f.

With regard to the last example, note that the relative sentence refers, not to the second of the two elements separated by the conclusion of the verse, but to both considered conjointly, hence scarcely contributes at all to the modification of the enjambement.

#### IV. THE RIME.

**321.** Only end-rime is of fundamental importance for Chaucer's versification; alliteration occurs fairly often, sometimes by accident, sometimes as a deliberate artifice, but always merely in the function of an accompanying ornament, never as an essential element of the poetical form. We shall therefore, in the first instance, discuss only end-rime, which we designate simply as rime. A brief consideration of alliteration will then follow.

**322.** We distinguish according to gender between **masculine and feminine rime**. Instances of masculine

<sup>1</sup> *this (thys, þis).*



rime are—*breeth* : *heeth*, *day* : *lay*, *licour* : *flour*, *auditours* : *sours*; of feminine—*sonne* : *yronne*, *melodye* : *je*, *corage* : *pilgrimage*. Amongst the feminine rimes we must also include the so-called gliding rime, as in *hevene* : *stevene*, *nevene* : *sevene*, since these words metrically considered never have more than two syllables, or as in *berie* : *merie*, *tragédie* : *comédie*, since the *i* in such words is always a semi-vowel in metre. Hence cases like *swevenis* : *swevene is*, *beris* (for *beries*) : *mery is*, may, on account of the first element in each of these combinations, be treated as feminine rimes.

323. The most important element in rime is the **tonic syllable of the rime-word**. It coincides with the last stressed syllable of the verse, which need not be a primary stress; secondary stress suffices, for instance, *melodye* : *je*, *corage* : *pilgrimage*, *auditours* : *sours*, *seemely* : *fétisly*, *lustieste* : *fayreste* etc.

324. A rime is adequate if the vowel of the tonic syllable of the rime-word and all the phonetic elements following are identical with the corresponding elements of the word to which it is linked. Our immediate task is to investigate in what measure Chaucer's rimes fulfil this condition.

325. We shall in the first instance consider the **tonic vowel of the rime-syllable** with regard to quantity and quality. As regards quantity Chaucer's method may briefly be stated as follows: he rimes long vowels with long ones (also diphthongs with diphthongs), short vowels with short ones, variable vowels either with variable ones or with either of the other two groups. Only the latter part of this state-



ment seems to require further discussion. However, as a full and detailed enquiry into the quantity of Chaucer's vowels was made in ch. i., a few examples will suffice to recall what was said there. A word like *best* (*bestia*) is linked, on the one hand, with *ēst*, on the other, with words like *best* (*optime*), *brēst*; *was* rimes with *caas*, *wel* with *dēel*, *upōn* with *gōōn* 547/563 [G. 563] etc. A vowel which changes its quality together with its quantity, is not to be considered variable: thus beside *breest* with *ē* we find *brēst* with *ē*, whilst beside the form *wel* with a variable vowel there occurs one with a decided vowel-length: *wel*, *wēel* and *weel*. Without change of quality a short vowel may, in some instances, be lengthened by shortening the following consonant. This occurs especially in Romance words in the case of *r*, and, to a yet greater extent, of toneless *s*: *werre were*, *passee pace* (the latter the ordinary form), *Boesse Boece*, *Lucesse Lucrece* etc.

Of Germanic words the following come into question—*hadde* (*hade*: *blade* 18/617 [Prol. 617], *spade*: *hade* 16/553 [Prol. 553]). In *goddes* Pl. of *god* (*goddis*: *forbode is* 472/2295 [E. 2295]), *goddess* (*goddis*: *forbode is* Scogan 15) the MS. spelling seems rather to indicate treatment of the vowel as variable. The treatment seems doubtful in the rimes *shape*: *hape* (*shappe*: *happe*, *shap*: *hap*) 566/1208 [G. 1208], and *unhape*: *shape* (*unhappe*: *shappe*, *unhap*: *shap*) Scogan 29, where either *hape* stands for *happe*, or in *happe* and *shape* the vowel is pronounced with variable quantity, or, finally, in *shape* the final *-e* has become apocopated and the preceding vowel been shortened in consequence, so that the word can rime with *hap*.



For the sake of rime long Romance *u* can be shortened under secondary stress in the ending *-ous*, so that links like *amorus* : *Aurelius*, *curius* : *Julius*, *lecherus* : *Apus*, *desirus* : *Theseus* become possible. Conversely the *u* of the Latin termination *us* is sometimes lengthened for the sake of rime on long English *u*—*hous* : *Kaukasous* 367/1139 [D. 1139].

It is worthy of note that variable *i* and *u* in an open syllable are so rarely linked in Chaucer with the corresponding long vowels (there are no corresponding short ones). But Leg. 370 *writen* (Pl. Pret.) rimes with *endytten* S.T. 268/3580 [B. 3580], *brike* : *Amoryke*. On a more complicated case (Troil. II. 933) cf. § 326. But if Fame 649 [Globe, Fame II. 141] we get *neyghebores* : *dores* (this is the correct spelling), we must remember that in the first word originally long *u* under secondary stress—though it maintains its quantity in a rime like *neyghebour* : *honour* 507/961 [F. 961]—is, on the whole, to be considered a variable vowel in Chaucer, as a frequently recurring *o* for *ou*, even in good MSS., seems to prove.

**326. The quality** of the tonic syllable in a rime-word is also as a rule carefully respected by Chaucer. In cases where the same word is used in different rimes, it has more than one phonetic form in the language of the poet, as, for instance, *fel*, *fil* 'he fell', *kisse kesse*; *heet heet*, *dēd deed*, *Crete Crete*; *dradde dredde*; *so soo*, *two twoo*; *proporcion proporcoun*, *Palamoun Palamoun* etc.

But the poet seems to have allowed himself a certain degree of licence: Troil. II. 933, he rimes *riden* : *abiden* : *yeden* (= *ieden*? not, as generally,



*yeeden* ?); he links open and closed *e* in *leemes*: *dremes* 286/4120, *leef*: *leef* 53/1838, *swere*: *heere* Troil. III. 384; on open and closed *o*, cf. §§ 31 and 72. Romance *u* and *ü* were discussed § 75; it may be added that Lat. *u* appears exceptionally to have the sound of *ü* in *coitu* 458/1811 [E. 1811]: *eschu* (O.Fr. *eschiu*, *eskiu*, 'shy').

**327. The unaccented vowel of the feminine rime** is as a rule weak *e*. It has been noted above that Chaucer does not generally apocopate this final *e* when preceded by a vowel or simple consonant, nor does he ignore it in rime, even though within the metre it is never syllabic (as in *some* and in the Pl. *some*), or at least very rarely so (as in the Romance substantives in *-ye*). The rigid distinction of rimes in *ýe* and *y*, *-ce* and *-s* (which are only confounded once or twice in Sire Thopas, cf. § 223  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ ) provides therefore a very essential criterion for the differentiation of genuine works of the poet from such as are falsely attributed to him.

On the other hand, Chaucer's language admits in this respect also certain doublets like *heer heere* (hic), *thæþ there* (ibi), *effek* and *eeke*, *vicary* (for *vicarie*) and *vicaryre*, *Senec* and *Senekke* etc.

Further, a few remarkable instances of apocope in rime occur—*speþek* for *speke* 3rd. Sing. Pres. Conj.: *effek* 586/324 [H. 324], cf. Anglia I. 535; *feel* for *feele* 1st. Sing. Pres. Ind. 64/2232 [A. 2232]: *weel* (this spelling is absolutely necessary, cf. Harl. and Cambr. *wel*: *fel*).

Here belongs probably also 298/4577 [B. 4577] *effek*: *bræþek*, where *bræþek* should probably be parsed as 3rd. Sing. Pret. Conj. (in which case, of course, *eeke*:



*breeke* would be conceivable, but in the best MSS. apocope has taken place). Cf. further *allow* (for *alloue*, spelt *allowe*) *the*, § 328.

**328.** In a feminine rime Chaucer not infrequently links two words with one. In this case, he on the one hand takes the liberty of treating a sonorous vowel like weak *e*, as in the well-known rimes—*Rôme* : *to me*, *youthe* : *allow the* ; on the other hand, of transforming weak *e* before a consonant into *i* (which, of course, in more than one M.E. dialect frequently takes its place), especially in the termination *-es* : *werkis* : *derk is* 529/66 [G. 66], *werkis* : *clerk is* : *derk is* 145/481 [B. 481], *clerkis* : *clerk is* 294/4426 [B. 4426] ; 448/1428 [E. 1428], *nonis* : *noon is* 15/523 [Prol. 523], *agoon is* : *onis* 334/9 [D. 9] etc. In these cases elision more frequently takes place in the rime which consists of two words—*sonis* : *wone is* Fame 75, *causis* : *cause is* ib. 19, *placis* : *place is* 386/1767 [D. 1767], *sydis* : *gyde is* 528/45 [G. 45], *goddis* : *forbode is* 472/2295 [E. 2295], *swevenis* : *swevene is* 285/4111 [B. 4111] etc., or synklisis as in *beriis* : *mery is* 287/4156 [B. 4156] Beside *-is* for *-es* (which also occurs in rimes on single words *talīs* : *Alis = Alys* 343/319 [D. 319]), *-id* for *-ed* occurs, as in *confoundid* : *ywoundid* : *wounde hid* 132/103 [B. 103], and *-ith* for *-eth* as in *savith* : *significavit* 19/661 [Prol. 661].

Even a sonorous *e* is occasionally transformed to *i* in the weak rime-syllable : open *e* in *goddis* (for *goddesse*) : *forbode is* Scogan 15, closed *e* in *dytis* for *dytees* Fame 662 [Globe, Fame II. 114] : *lyte is*. The fairly corrupt passage Fame 620 ff. [II. 112] should doubtless be emended thus :



*And natheless hast set thy wit,  
Al though that in thyn heed full lyte is<sup>1</sup>  
To maken bookes, songes, dytis etc.<sup>2</sup>*

**329.** Of the **consonants** necessary to form an adequate rime we must, in the first instance, consider the final ones in masculine rime, and the medial ones in feminine rime. As a rule there is complete coincidence between the links in any given rime-combination. Very rarely small deviations occur: *advocats* : *allas* 312/292 [C. 292], (Petworth : *advocas*, Sloane : *advocase*, whilst Harl. Corp. and Lansdowne have a totally different reading; the same rime occurs in O.Fr. poets); *terme* : *yerne* Blaunche 79 is not to the point, since *erne* (§ 48, IV. γ) would suit the context better than *yerne*; somewhat unusual remains Troil. II. 884 *syke* : *endyte* : *whyte*. In rimes like *reherce* : *werse*, or *reherce* : *diverse* it is only a question of different symbols for the same sound. *h* is treated as mute in *wounde hid* 132/106 [B. 106] (: *confoundid* : *ywoundid*).

Chaucer is also extremely accurate with regard to final consonants in a feminine rime. But S.T. 19/661 [Prol. 661] he rimes *savith* : *significavit*; 391/1933 [D. 1933] *Davit* (for *David*) : *eructavit*; Blaunche 73 he uses the Northern form *telles* (instead of *telleth*) riming with *elles*.

**330.** Frequently, though not so often as in O.Fr. poetry, the initial consonant of the tonic rime-syllable is affected by the assonance, cf. *pardoun* : *adoun*,

<sup>1</sup> MSS. : *ful lytel is*.

<sup>2</sup> Fairfax, Bodley : *To make songes dylees (dileys) bookys*.

Caxton, Thynne : *To make bookes, songes or (and) dillees*.



*accorde* V. : *corde* N. Nor does Chaucer, in such cases, disdain those cheap combinations in which two words with the same derivative suffix, or two compounds in which the second element is identical, rime with each other. Here belong words in *-nesse*, as, for instance, *goodnesse* : *soothfastnesse*, *gladnesse* : *lyknesse*, *shamefastnesse* : *besynnesse* ; in *-ly*, for instance, *softely* : *openly*, *sodeynly* : *deliverly* ; in *-ment*, like *eggement* : *torment* ; in *-tee*, like *tretee* : *magestee*, *deyntee* : *Trinitee* ; further cases like *namore* : *everemore*, like *presence* : *absence*, like *recorde* : *accorde*, *commende* : *amende* etc. (Amongst merely adequate rimes cases like the following may be compared—*reverence* : *diligence*, *richesse* : *gentillesse*, and in a further sense, such as *is* : *nis*, *was* : *nas*, *wolde* : *nolde*.) Another, less numerous group of such rimes is formed by cases in which a noun in the Pl. is linked to a noun in the Sg. followed by the Verb. Subst. : *clerkis* : *clerk is*, *place is* : *place is*, *causis* : *cause is* etc.

The most artistic of the rimes with the same initial consonant are without doubt those in which each element is an independent word, identical in form, but differing in meaning, as *see* 'to see' : *see* 'the sea,' *seeke* 'seek' : *seeke* 'sick,' *heere* 'hear' : *heere* 'here,' *style* 'post' : *style* 'style, diction,' *fern* 'fern, plant' : *fern* 'previous, before' etc. The number of such combinations is necessarily limited.

**331.** Sometimes the rime extends beyond the tonic syllable and includes the vowel of the preceding syllable—*amendement* : *esement*, *trewely* : *hertely*, *pitee* : *citee*, *humilitee* : *adversitee*, *alenge* : *challenge* ; without an intervening consonant, for instance, in



*scorpioun* : *confusioun* ; sometimes even the initial consonant of the preceding syllable, as *execucioun* : *fornicioun*, *subjeccioun* : *presumpcioun* ; finally, also the vowel of the next syllable but one preceding—*confusioun* : *conclusioun*, *affecciouns* : *protecciouns*, *dominacioun* : *habitacioun*, *constellacioun* : *operacioun*, *significaciouns* : *tribulaciouns*. The majority of such combinations are of the commonplace type.

**332.** Intermittent rime which is akin on the one hand to assonance, on the other to alliteration, occurs, for instance in cases like *abregge* : *alegge*, *un-kyndely* : *unwittingly*, *nightertale* : *nightingale* etc.

**333.** Rime is rarely employed in Chaucer except at the conclusion of a line. It is not my intention to point out special effects which are occasionally produced by sectional rime, or other conceits. The sequence of rimes will be discussed in the following section on the stanza. In this connection I only wish to remark that no law regulating the alternation of gender in rime is discernible in Chaucer's work.

**334. Alliteration.** We possess a creditable article on Alliteration in Chaucer by F. Lindner (Jahrb. für rom. u. engl. Spr. u. Lit. XIV. 311, English version in Ch. Soc. Pub. Essays on Ch. VIII.), to which I should like to refer the reader interested in this subject. But at the same time, I cannot refrain from expressing my opinion that the subject has by no means been thoroughly exhausted by Lindner's treatment of it. I miss in his article :

(1) The differentiation of alliterative formulas and alliterative combinations of other kinds ;



(2) An investigation of the question whether and to what extent syllables in the arsis may be considered as participating in the alliteration; Lindner apparently ignores accentuation;

(3) A more accurate statement of the different forms in which alliteration considered metrically occurs in Chaucer;

(4) A more systematic answer to the question on what occasions Chaucer specially makes use of alliteration, to what varying extent this device is employed in different forms of metre and in the poet's various works (Lindner considers exclusively the Canterbury Tales), or in portions of them. The desire for a fresh investigator, or at least a fresh investigation, seems therefore pardonable.

Within the limits of the present sketch the following observations will suffice. They owe a good deal to Lindner's article, but in some points go beyond it.

**335.** In Chaucer's poetry we find a number of **alliterative formulas**, the majority of which were transmitted to him by the language of daily life as well as by that of poetry, but in part may have been coined by him, for the character of a formula is imparted to any given combination of words, not only by traditional use, but very largely by qualities which recommend it for popular employment. Thus no one will hesitate for a moment to declare combinations like *straunge strondes*, or *as meeke as (is) a mayde* to be formulas—without waiting to enquire how often they occur in pre-Chaucerian poetry. But the case is doubtful even in the phrase *fighten for the* (or *oure*) *feyth*, cf. *And fougheten for oure feyth at Tra-*



*missene* 2/62 [Prol. 62]. And it is absolutely certain that from 2/54 [Prol. 54] *In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce*, we have no right to infer a formula *reyse(n) in Ruce*.

A number of systematically grouped alliterative formulas may follow here: *Blood and bones, braun and bones, dale and doune, flessch and fissh, hunte and horn, holt and heeth, style and stoon, toun and tour, thikke and thenne, word and werk; hood nē hat, herde nē hyne; freend or fo.—Foul and fayr, keene and coold, long and lene, seek and sore, stern and stout, war and wys, wylly and wys, weery and wet, wylde and wood, leef nē looth; looth or leef.—Dyken and delven, hakken and hewen, hawken and huntten, swelten and sweeten, wanen and wenden, weepen and waylen; sleen or saven.*

*Fresshe floures, hardy herte, hye halles, mighty maces, poure persoun, straunge strondes, wedded wyf, wyde world, wikked wight, a worthy womman, worthy wommen: floures fresshe, groves greene, hilles hye, robes riche, rubies rede, sorwes sore, woodes wylde, woundes wyde.*

*A seynt of silk, water of a welle; foul in flight.—Big of bones, fair of face.—Drewen a draught, drinken a draught, han the hyer hond, hangen down the heed, hyden the (his) heed, leden the (a, his) lyf, leven his lyf, seen a sight, singen a song, sooth to seyne, to seyne (the) sooth, tellen a tale, taken by taylle, wandren by the weye, winnen to wyf, syken sore, smellen sweete.*

*As besy as bees, as meeke as a mayde, as reed as rose, as stille as stoon.*

Now Chaucer very frequently employs such formulas as compact units, but he sometimes also



resolves them into their component parts, inverts them, modifies them more or less, sometimes welds two into one. He also frequently unites such formulas, as if they were simple notional words, with other notional words alliterating with them.

**336.** In the normal short line of four beats there are frequently two staves, which occur, as the following examples prove, in the most diverse positions in the verse :

*And nóthing nēedeth it, pardée* Fame 575 [II. 67].

*Bée hit rōuned, rád or sōnge* Fame 722 [II. 214].

*And fōr I shōld the bēt abréyde*

Fame 599 [II. 51].

*And péynest thée to préyse his dert*

Fame 627 [II. 119].

*That dóoth me flée ful ófte sér* Fame 610 [II. 102].

The position of the staves produces the most artistic effect, when, as in the two last examples, they are upon the first and third, or upon the second and fourth beats. This is also the most frequent position for them. Chaucer's short line rarely has three staves, as in the following examples :

*That have his service sought and seeke*

Fame 626 [II. 118].

*Or as craft countrefeteth Kynde*

Fame 1213 [III. 123].

**337.** In some cases the two verses of a rimed couplet seem linked by alliteration, whether according to the formula *a-a*, or *ab-ab*, or even *aa-aa* :

*Is for thy lore and for thy prow ;*

*Lat see, darst thou yit looke now ?*

Fame 579 f. [II. 72].



*Til that he felt that I hadde heet,  
And felt eek that myn herte beet* ib. 569 f. [II. 62].

*I wol thee telle what I am,  
And whider thou shalt, and why I cam*  
ib. 601 f. [II. 93].

But other combinations also occur—especially when the last verse of a rimed couplet is linked to the first one of the following couplet. In the following three examples we find the combinations *a-aa*, *abb-a*, *aa-bab*:

*Thou art noyous for to carie,  
And nothing needeth it pardee*  
Fame 575 f. [II. 67].

*That dooth me flee ful ofte fer,  
To doon al his comaundement* ib. 610 f. [II. 102].

*First I that in my feet have thee,  
Of which thou hast a fere and wonder*  
ib. 606 f. [II. 99].

A couple of examples from the Deeth of Blaunche may further illustrate the use Chaucer makes of alliteration in the short rimed couplet. The second one proves that the same stave occasionally recurs in a series of consecutive verses.

*I have greet wonder, by this light,  
How that I live, for day nē night  
I may not slepe welny nought.  
I have so many an ydel thought,  
Purely for defaute of sleepe,  
That, by my trouthe, I take no keepe  
Of nothing, hou hit comth or gooth,  
Nē me nis nothing leef nor looth* Blaunche 1 ff.



*The mayster hunte anoon, foot hoot,  
 With a greet horne blew three moot  
 At the uncouplinge of his houndis,  
 Withinne a whyle the herte founde is  
 Yhalowed and rechaced faste . . .* ib. 375 ff.

NOTE. Even in the short line of three beats two staves sometimes occur, for instance: *At Popering in the place* 191/1910 [B. 1910]. *As it was Goddes grace* 191/1913 [B. 1913]. *His lippes rede as rose* 191/1916 [B. 1916] etc.

**338. Alliteration** is more in evidence in **heroic verse** than in the short line. The former not only sometimes contains two staves—varying in position—but not infrequently even three. The alliteration produces the finest effect when the staves fall upon the first, second, and fourth beats, whilst the cæsura occurs after the arsis following upon the second beat, as in the following verses:

*And which they weren || and of what degree*  
 2/40 [Prol. 40].

*Ther shiveren shaftes || upon sheeldes thikke*  
 74/2605 [A. 2605].

*His hardy herte || mighte him helpe naught*  
 76/2649 [A. 2649].

But it is very effective also when the first, third, and fifth beats alliterate, whilst the third is the cæsural beat:

*And bar away the boon || bitwixe hem bothe.*  
 35/1180 [A. 1180].

*And evere gaped up || into the eyr.*  
 100/3473 [A. 3473].

The effect is less satisfactory when, the position of the staves remaining the same, the position of the



cæsura is changed ; or when two of the three staves fall upon the fourth and fifth beats ; or when two fall upon the first and second, the third upon the fifth beat ; or, finally, when all three staves occur before the cæsura. One example follows of each of these cases :

*My purpos was || to Pitee to compleyne* Pitee 5.  
*That in this world || nas never wight so wo* ib. 3.  
*Ful worthy was he || in his lordes werre*

2/74 [Prol. 74].

*Ther stomblen steedes stronge || and doun gooth al*  
 75/2613 [A. 2613].

If the verse has only two staves they would most appropriately rest upon the first and third beats, or upon the second and fourth :

*A loviero || and a lusty || bacheleer* 3/80 [Prol. 80].

*Out-goorn the swerdes || as the silver brighte*  
 75/2608 [A. 2608].

Other possible combinations will not be mentioned in this connection.

Occasionally four staves occur in a verse ; as, for instance, in

*I wretched wight || that weepe and wayle thus*  
 28/931 [A. 931]

(according to Harl.) ; perhaps also in the following verse, although the preposition *thurgh* occurs in the place of the metrical ictus, but does not bear the logical stress (cf. § 341) :

*He thurgh the thikkeste || of the throng gan threste*  
 75/2612 [A. 2612].

Occasionally the verse contains two different alliterating staves in each hemistich, in the order *aa-bb*, for instance, in the following consecutive verses :



*Out-brest the blood || with sterne stremes rede ;  
With mighty maces || <sup>1</sup> bones they tobreste ;*

75/2610 [2610].

The following verse should probably be considered a similar instance, since the particle *whan* is, in consequence of its position, less emphatic for the ear:

*For wel he wiste || whan that song was songe*

21/711 [Prol. 711].

339. In heroic metre the same alliteration sometimes extends through more than one line, as, for instance, in the following passage:

*He rolleth under foot || as dooth a bal,  
He foyneth on his feet || with his tronchoun,  
And he him hurtleth || with his hors adoun,  
He thurgh the body is hurt, || and sithen take,  
Maugre his heed, || and brought untoo the stake ;  
As forward was, || right ther he moste abyde*

75/2614 f. [A. 2614].

340. Chaucer uses alliteration most extensively and effectively in descriptions of battles and kindred subjects. This is by no means the result of accident, for M.E. possessed rich stores of traditional formulas bearing on such subjects, a fact which is further attested by the purely alliterative poems of the 14th. century, the martial passages in which are in many respects the most successful. Anyone who compares the well-known battle-scene in *Joseph of Arimathe*, 489-517, with the account of the tournament in the *Knights Tale* (from which, following Lindner's example, we have above quoted numerous verses) will be compelled to acknowledge some closer historical connection between the two. With

<sup>1</sup> MS. *the bones*.



reference to Chaucer, note further the description of the Battle of Actium in the Legend of Cleopatra (Leg. 635 ff.).

**341.** Chaucer is not one of the poets who consistently unite alliteration and end-rime in their verse. Rich as his language is in alliterative formulas, and numerous as the alliterative verses are which flow from his pen, yet there is no evidence to prove that he ever consciously observed any rule binding upon alliterative poetry. It is therefore difficult to determine where in his poetry alliteration begins, and where it ends. The following remarks on the relation in his poems between alliteration on the one hand, and accent and metrical stress on the other, as well as on the character of the alliteration in his verse, do not therefore claim to be a final settlement of the question.

With regard to the **relation between alliteration** on the one hand, **and accent and metrical stress** on the other, it is obvious that all such syllables may alliterate as are capable of word- or sentence-accent, as well as of metrical stress. This applies also to words under a weaker accent, like *was*, *hadde*, or like *he*, *him*, *hire* etc., if these pronouns are not logically emphasised. But such slightly accented words do not necessarily bear the alliteration, even when they have the same initial symbol as more strongly accented ones, cf. for instance, *whan* in the verse 21/711 [A. 711], quoted in § 338. Whether they do so or not, depends essentially upon their position in the verse, and on the position and number of the other staves.

Unaccented monosyllables, and English prefixes in the arsis, are incapable of alliteration. I am not



equally convinced that this applies to the unaccented first syllable of a Romance word or of a foreign Proper Name. In the following case, for instance ;

*That cléped is Caljopée*

Fame 1400 [Globe, Fame III. 310]

the similarity in the initial consonants cannot have escaped Chaucer ; it probably pleased him, *i.e.* this is without doubt an instance of alliteration.

In case of conflict between metrical rhythm and word-accent, the alliteration is determined by the word-accent. But if it is a case of variance between metrical rhythm and sentence-stress, the question arises as to whether the conflict is of a character to render an emphasis of the ictus prescribed by the metre absolutely unendurable. If this question is answered in the affirmative, the sentence-stress necessarily attracts the alliteration, cf. Fame 1213 [Globe, Fame III. 123] (§ 336). But if in the negative, then sometimes the more strongly accented syllable will alliterate, sometimes the syllable under the metrical ictus: the former, for instance, in 75/2617 [A. 2617] (§ 239), the latter in 75/2615 [A. 2615] (§ 239), and probably also 72/2612 [A. 2612] (§ 238). In no case can both alliterate at the same time ; thus in 75/2615 [A. 2615] *He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun* it is not permissible to assume, in addition to the *f*-rime, an *h*-rime on *he*, *his-his*, although *he* (= 'the latter') and the first *his* ('of the former') have a stronger sentence-accent than the notional words following them.

**342.** With regard to the quality of the alliteration in Chaucer it will suffice to note the following :



Alliteration of the smooth breathing cannot be denied, though it occurs less frequently than alliteration of *h* and of real consonants. Apparently *sp*, *st*, *sk* can alliterate with simple *s*, but *sh*, which denotes a single sound, though one with double articulation, only alliterates with itself; *wh* alliterates with *w*.

If amongst the words alliterating with each other there are frequently such as stand in the relationship of derivative and radical to each other, or such as are merely derivational variations from the same stem, or inflexional variations of the same word, or, finally, such as are absolutely identical, the effect of the alliteration is not thereby diminished, but rather increased. Iteration is an artistic device for which Chaucer displays an unusual predilection, and which as a rule he uses most effectively, though sometimes, indeed, to an exaggerated degree. Two examples will suffice (but cf. likewise *Fame* 568 f. [II. 60]; 610 f. [II. 102]; § 337 and *S.T.* 75/2614 f. [A. 2614] § 339); the second one is open to criticism.

*Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,*

*And many a breme and many a luce in sturwe*

10/349 f. [Prol. 349].

*That, of his mercy, God so merciable*

*On us his grete mercy multiplie.*

*For reverence of his mooder Marye*

189/1878 ff. [B. 1878].

**343.** Alliteration, as well as end-rime, contributes in Chaucer, each in its own characteristic way, though in a varying degree, to the elevation of poetic diction. But whereas alliteration comparatively speaking but rarely adds emphasis to the rhythmical structure of a



verse, it is the further and invariable function of end-rime to confirm the rhythmical unity of a line, and at the same time to group the individual verses in larger entities and rhythmical systems.

#### V. THE STANZA.

**344.** The rhythmical systems employed by Chaucer are, with only two exceptions, **isometrical**. The simplest isometrical system is the rimed couplet which, however, since its conclusion does not admit of a uniform punctuation, can lay no claim to the name of stanza, but is rather akin to stichic composition.

**345.** Two species of **rimed couplets** occur in Chaucer: a short one consisting of normal short lines, and an heroic one consisting of heroic verses. The short-rimed couplet was transmitted to the poet by his English predecessors, and is the oldest form of his epic poetry. The Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse (12th. Sept., 1369—June 20th., 1370) was composed in this metre, and probably many another lost work of the poet. At a later period—so far as we know—he only once, for a special purpose, reverted to this form, namely in the Hous of Fame (1384). Chaucer himself introduced the heroic couplet into English poetry. He did not discover this metrical form, until he had for years availed himself, even for epic purposes, of seven-line stanzas in heroic metre. He employed it for the first time in the Legende of Goode Women (1385). From that time onwards it is his ordinary vehicle for epic



narrative : by far the greater part of the Canterbury Tales—namely the whole frame and the greater number and most successful of the Tales—is conveyed in heroic metre. The poem of Palamon and Arcyte when revised for insertion in the C.T. exchanged the seven-line stanza for the new form. Cf. with reference to these facts my *Chaucer-Studien* I. 48 f., 56, 110 f., 144 f., 149, 150.

NOTE. According to Skeat, *Prioresses Tale* etc. p. xix f., Chaucer is supposed to have imitated the heroic couplet from Guillaume Machault, more especially from his '*Complainte écrite après la bataille de Poitiers et avant le siège de Reims par les Anglais*' (1356-1358). It may readily be granted that the English poet was probably acquainted with this poem. Yet it remains somewhat extraordinary that so long a period should have elapsed before the idea occurred to him of making use of the same metrical system. Moreover, we ought to bear in mind that for the Englishman the really great and decisive step was not so much the use of a longer rimed couplet, as the imitation of the heroic metre. For if we consider that in the *Legende of Goode Women* Chaucer starts from the idea of a cycle of *Lives of Saints* (hence the secondary title: the *Seyntes Legende of Cupyde* S.T. 130/61 [B. 61]), also that the Southern cycle of *Legends* was composed in couplets of M.E. Alexandrines, we can easily understand—without dwelling on any possible reminiscences of Machault's *Complainte*—how the idea occurred to him of composing this particular work in rimed couplets of the heroic verse with which he was already familiar.

**346.** The greater number of Chaucer's **isometrical stanzas** is composed of heroic verses. Only in the *Deeth of Blaunche* a few stanzas consisting of lines of four beats have been inserted, which may perhaps serve as examples of the lyric poetry of his youth. They are probably based on French forms of popular



origin. A monostrophic six-line song runs (rime-scheme *aabbaa*):

*Lord, hit maketh myn herte light,  
Whan I thenke on that sweete wight,  
That is so seemly on to see,  
And wissh to God, hit might so bee  
That she wolde holde me for hir knight,  
My lady that is so fayre and bright*

Blaunche 1175-1180.

The same Black Knight who sings this song as an earnest of his love-poetry had previously recited another song, *a lay, a maner song Withoute note, withoute song* (471 f.). This lay consists of two dissimilar stanzas which run:

*I have of sorw so grete woon  
That joye gete I never noon,  
Now that I see my lady bright,  
Which I have loved with al my might,  
Is fro me deed and is agoon.*

*Allas the<sup>1</sup> deeth! what eyleth thee  
That thou noldest han taken me,  
Whan that<sup>2</sup> thou took my lady sweete,  
That was so fayr, so fressh, so free,  
So good eek<sup>3</sup> that men may wel see,  
Of al goodnes she had no meete*

Blaunche 475 ff.

The order of rimes is therefore *aabba—ccdccd*. The first stanza shows a combination of continuous rime and embracing rime (like the little monostrophic song, but in a different arrangement), the

<sup>1</sup> the wanting in MS.

<sup>2</sup> *whan that* Thynne, (*whān, when*) MSS.

<sup>3</sup> *eeek* wanting.



second is an instance of tail-rime (§ 348). In Thynne's edition (1532) the two stanzas are assimilated to each other: a verse has been added to the first, and in the second, to the detriment of the sense, the lines have been transposed: *ccddcc*. Chaucer himself distinctly refers to dissimilar stanzas, perhaps even to an uneven number of verses in the whole poem, in the words: *He made of ryme ten vers or twelve Of a compleynte to himselve* (463 f.), cf., however, Ellis in Furnivall's *Trial Forewords*, p. 114—p. 133.

347. Of the isometrical stanzas in heroic verse the finest is the seven-line stanza, which occurs for the first time in the *Compleynte to Pitee*. The rime-order is *ab ab bcc*, and the stanza is clearly tripartite, the first two parts of it (*pedes*) being equal to each other but unequal to the third, the *cauda* (*Abgesang*). Chaucer often observes this tripartition, even in the logical structure of his argument, without pedantically binding himself to it. The second stanza of the *Compleynte to Pitee* may serve as an example:

*And whan that I by lengthe of certeyn yeres  
Had evere in oon a tyme sought to speke,  
To Pitee ran I, al bispreynt with teres,  
To preyen hire on Crueltee me awreke;  
But eer I might with any word outbreke,  
Or tellen any of my peynes smerte,  
I fond hir deed and buried in an herte.*

This stanza occurs in O.Fr. and Provençal art-poetry, and probably developed according to the following scheme: *ab ab aab* (thus in Bernart de Ventadorn), *ab ab baa*, *ab ab bcc*. Although not



its creator, Chaucer may claim the stanza as his own. The skill with which he constructs it and the extent to which he uses it have given it a far greater significance than it originally possessed. The English poet has set his own peculiar seal upon the system, especially by the consistency with which he employs a new rime for the last couplet; whereby the structure becomes more clearly outlined and the conclusion more defined. Chaucer remained loyal to the seven-line stanza even after he had become acquainted with the Italian *ottave-rime* in Boccaccio's epics. The *ottave-rime*, which is only differentiated from the seven-line stanza by the interpolation of a verse: *ab ab (a)b cc*, cannot, as regards harmonious proportion of the parts, sustain comparison with it: the *ottave-rime* contains four parts instead of three; the tripartite *frons* (*Aufgesang*) is far too long for the *cauda* (*Abgesang*).

Hence, in his second, Italianate period (1373-1384), Chaucer wisely employed the seven-line stanza in a preponderating degree; not only in poems like the *Lyf of Seynt Cecyle* (Second Nonnes Tale) or the *Parlement of Foules*, but also in romantic epics like *Palamoun and Arcyte* (the first lost version) and *Troilus*, the metre of which challenged a comparison with Boccaccio's *ottave-rime*. He uses the same stanza in the introduction (*proëm* and story) of the *Compleynte of Mars*, and later in the epic part of *Anelida and Arcyte*; the touching story of *Griseldis* (Clerkes Tale), the legend of the pious Christian boy murdered by the Jews (Prioresses Tale), a few Links in the *Canterbury Tales*, and most of his lyrical products are also in this form.



Next in importance, though considerably below the seven-line stanza, ranks the eight-line stanza which—like almost all his complex metrical schemes—Chaucer also imitated from O.Fr. poets. The rime-scheme is *ab ab bc bc*, the *cauda* is therefore symmetrical with the *frons*, and the stanza must have developed out of the old form *ab ab ba ba*. This stanza occurs for the first time in the A.B.C., then in the Former Age, in the Envoy to Bukton, in the Ballade de Visage sans Peinture (Fortune), in narrative poetry only in the *tragedies* contributed by the Monk of the Canterbury Tales.

Only isolated instances of other stanzaic forms occur: one of six-lines (*ab ab cb*) in the Envoy to the Clerkes Tale, an eight-line one, with the rime-scheme (*ababbccb*) which is unusual in Chaucer, in the Compleynte of Venus translated from the French of Oto de Gransons; a nine-line one (*aab aab bcc*) in the lyrical part (the real Compleynte) of the Compleynte of Mars; another nine-line one (*aab aab bab*) prevails in the Compleynte of Anelida. On the stanzas of the Envoys and on the form of the Roundel, cf. §§ 350, 352.

348. Only two **metabolic stanzas** occur in Chaucer: one borrowed from art-poetry in the Compleynte of Anelida (Anel. 256-271; 317-332) and a popular one in Sire Thopas. Both are constructed on the principle of the tail-rime (*rime couée*), which prevails also in the *frons* of the 9-line stanza mentioned in § 347. The stanza in Sire Thopas is, however, tail-rime (*rime couée*) properly so-called. The metabolic stanza in Anelida is a blending of normal short lines and heroic verse,



and is arranged as follows (the capitals indicate heroic verse):

*aaaB aaab bbbA bbbA.*

The tail-rime in *Sire Thopas* appears in two forms: in the simple normal form of six lines (the normal double form of 12 lines does not occur in Chaucer), and in the expanded form. The simple normal form consists of four normal short lines and two short lines of three beats each, and the rime-scheme is as follows (the capitals indicate the normal short line): *AAb AAb* or *AAb CCb*. The expanded form again consists of two varieties: the interpolating and the continuative, which are differentiated by the fact that in the first case a short line of one beat ( $\gamma$ ) introduces the second section of the stanza; in the second case a similar line ( $\gamma$ ) introduces a third section: *AAb  $\gamma$  BBc* (occurs only once), and *AAb AAb  $\gamma$  AAc* or *AAb AAb  $\gamma$  DDc*. The tail-rime stanza was the favourite metre of the M.E. minstrels, whose crude art Chaucer parodies in *Sire Thopas*. For further details, cf. ten Brink's *Engl. Lit.*, I. 207, 249 f., 267 (*Engl. translation*).

#### 349. Relation between Stanza and Poem.

In epic poetry the rule is that the same system—whether rimed couplet or stanza—should be repeated the requisite number of times up to the end of the poem, with any variation in the rime that may be preferred (so long as the rime-order in the stanza remains the same). But in *Sire Thopas* Chaucer intentionally varies his treatment of the *rime couée*. In that series of fragments called the *Canterbury Tales*, which is distinguished by the variety of its



rhythm, structure and subjects, each tale must be considered an independent unit, and thus it is no accident if those tales which are most closely interwoven with the dialogue and action of the pilgrimage should appear in the same metrical form as the description of the journey to Canterbury. But this metrical frame-work is composed in the heroic couplet, which only once or twice gives place to the seven-line stanza; if we consider the last redaction of the fragments undertaken by the poet, we shall find that he allowed such stanzas to remain in one place only S.T. 190 [Sire Thopas]. Lyric pieces are, however, sometimes interpolated into epic poems: in *Troilus* without change in the prevailing system, in the *Deeth of Blaunche* with a slight change (in the Lay, not in the Song), with more considerable deviation in the *Parlement of Foules*, where a Roundel is inserted amongst the seven-line stanzas, and especially in the *Prologue to the Legende* where a Balade appears amongst the heroic couplets. The *Compleynte to Pitee* and the *Compleynte of Mars* are lyric poems with epic introductions, the fragment of *Anelida and Arcyte* might also be considered such. In *Pitee* the same system is employed for both main divisions, in the two other cases a variation takes place; *Anelida* is, however (if we except the *Canterbury Tales*), the sole example of a poem which, taken as a whole, is not isometrical.

350. In lyric poetry three species may be distinguished: poems consisting of similar stanzas, poems consisting of dissimilar stanzas, and monosrophic poems.



The first kind is by far the most important and the most numerous. Some of the examples belonging to it have a stanzaic conclusion to the actual lyrical structure, the *envoy* (Prov. *tornada*, French *envoi*), in which the person for whom the poem is intended, or whom it is to influence, is addressed, or in which the connection between the poem and the person is expressed in some other way, or which, though more rarely, by an unexpected digression to general topics, winds up with some concise epigrammatic dictum. In the art-poetry of Provence, where the envoy first makes its appearance, and where it attains its highest development, it generally takes the form of an incomplete stanza, the rime-scheme of which corresponds to the conclusion of the last stanza of the actual song. But the O.Fr. art-poets, particularly those of a later period, frequently deviated from this rule. Chaucer's treatment of the envoy will be discussed presently. Less frequently than an addition of this kind, there occurs a sort of independent preamble. In the first of the classes into which we divided Chaucer's lyric poetry, only the *Compleynte of Mars* is introduced by a stanza which—though in form identical with the others—reveals itself unmistakably as a *proëm* (cf. in the second division *The Compleynte of Anelida*). The nucleus of Chaucer's poems in isometrical stanzas is built up, as Bradshaw was the first to recognise, in such a manner that the total number of stanzas is divisible by three. Judging by the extant MSS. there are three exceptions to this rule. But of these three the hymn *Mooder of God* is only an apparent one, since there is evidently a stanza wanting



in this poem, which, in its present form, consists of 20 stanzas (cf. Furnivall, *Trial Forewords*, p. 94), the structure was therefore  $7 \times 3$ . The extant version of *The Former Age* (*Aetas Prima*), a paraphrase of the 5th. *Metrum* from Boethius *De Consolatione* II., consisting of 8 stanzas, is corrupt (the last verse of the 7th stanza is wanting); it is not only a somewhat careless specimen of the poet's craft (in the 6th stanza the rime-order is *abab bcac*, instead of *abab bcbc*), but it is also more descriptive than lyric. The A.B.C. was bound to contain 23 stanzas. In all other instances the rule holds good: in the *Compleynte to Pitee* the *Compleynte* itself contains  $3 \times 3$  stanzas, the lyrical part of the *Compleynte of Mars* contains, in addition to the proëm,  $5 \times 3$  elegiac stanzas, and all poems of the first division, transmitted as separate entities, are based on the principle of divisibility by three. Even in the lyric poems which share the stanzaic form of the epic in which they are inserted, Chaucer almost invariably follows the same principle. In the *Introduction to the Lyf of seynt Cecyle*, the *Hymn to the Virgin* imitated from Dante contains three stanzas S.T. 528/36 ff. [G. 36 ff.], and the prayer immediately following 529/57 ff. [G. 57 ff.] contains the same number; the *Invocation to the Virgin* in the *Prologue to the Prioresses Tale* 182/1657 ff. [B. 1657] also consists of three stanzas. In *Troilus* the song in which the love-lorn hero imitates Petrarch's 88th Sonnet (*Troilus* I. 400-420,) is a triplet; but on the other hand, *Antigone's* love-song (ib. II. 827-875) contains seven stanzas (unless we wish to admit a proëm), and the



song which Troilus sings at the climax of the action (ib. III. 1744-1771), again a paraphrase of a *Metrum* of Boethius, contains four stanzas.

In one species of the first division, namely the *balade*, the number of stanzas prescribed is not only one divisible by three, but actually three. Chaucer had become acquainted with and practised the *balade* in the form used by the contemporary French poets of the Puys, which had, in point of fact, only essentially formal qualities in common with the more popular Provençal *ballada*, and only shares the name of the poem called thus in later English and German poetry. The three stanzas of the *balade* are not only identical in structure, and hence in the arrangement of the rimes, but the very rimes are identical (which is not otherwise the case in Chaucer); each stanza concludes with a line forming a refrain, which is at the same time an integral part of the stanzaic structure. The stanza in Chaucer's *balades* generally contains 7 lines, thus in *Hyde Absalon* (Prologue to the *Legende*), in *Gentillesse*, *Stedfastnesse*, *Compleynte to his Purs* and *Trouthe*. Two poems are in form compound *Balades*: *Fortune* and the *Compleynte of Venus* consist each of three terns, each being in form a complete *balade*; in both poems the stanza contains 8 lines. Amongst the simple *balades* an envoy is added to *Stedfastnesse*, *Trouthe* and *Purs*. In the two former poems the envoy is a complete stanza, identical with the other stanzas of each poem, the refrain being varied in *Stedfastnesse*. In *Purs* it consists of a short system of 5 lines, riming in the order *aabba*, and—a most unusual occurrence—with totally new rimes, and consequently without repetition of the refrain. In another



connection (Litteraturblatt für roman. u. engl. Philol., 1883, No. 11) I tried to prove that this envoy was a later addition to the poem in question; these formal proofs may now serve to supplement the arguments brought forward there. In a compound balade the independent position of the envoy would not be surprising. Fortune, whose  $3 \times 3$  stanzas are arranged in the order  $ab\ ab\ bc\ bc$ , has an envoy in the form  $ab\ ab\ bab$ ; the rime  $b$  is totally new,  $a$ , however, corresponds to  $b$  in the stanza of the last tern. The Complaynte of Venus, the terns of which are composed in stanzas riming  $ab\ ab\ bc\ cb$ , has, exceptionally, an expanded envoy:  $aab\ aab\ aab$ ; rime  $a$  is new,  $b$  corresponds to  $a$  in the stanza of the first triad, to  $c$  in the stanza of the third, which is of course a mere accident. Under these circumstances the repetition of a refrain would be inconceivable in either case.

An extension of the term envoy is exemplified in the *Envoy* to the Clerkes Tale, which consists of six stanzas, each containing six lines, riming throughout  $ab\ ab\ cb$  ( $c$  is therefore not linked in the stanza, but only in the poem). *Envoy* in Chaucer means further epistle, missive. The Envoy to Bukton which accompanied the despatch of the Confessions of the Wyf of Bath consists of three eight-line stanzas, the envoy to Scogan of  $2 \times 3$  seven-line stanzas. Again, each of these poems contains an envoy properly so-called: in the Envoy to Bukton the envoy proper refers to the enclosed poem of the Wyf of Bath; in the Epistle to Scogan it conveys the practical purport of the whole poem. Both envoys are complete stanzas.



**351.** The second class, to which belong the Provençal *descort* and the French *lai*, is represented by only two examples in Chaucer. Both are, as regards contents, elegies. The isometrical *lay* in two stanzas, sung by the Black Knight in the Deeth of Blaunche, was quoted above (§ 346). Fairly complicated in structure is the Lament of the heroine in Anelida and Arcyte. It consists of a monostrophic proëm, two movements of six stanzas each, and a concluding strophe. As a matter of fact, only two stanzas occur: an isometrical one of nine lines (§ 347) and a metabolic one of sixteen lines (§ 348). The latter occupies the fifth place in each of the two movements; the former is used everywhere else, even in the proëm and the conclusion.

**352.** A system which suffices to constitute a whole poem can, strictly speaking, only be designated a strophe if in a variety of poems it is so frequently employed that its re-appearance, like that of an old acquaintance, is immediately noted—as, for instance, in the case of the Italian sonnet. But we will venture to apply the term to all cases in which the structure of the system in question is clearly evident.

The following may therefore be considered monostrophic poems in Chaucer (the Proverbs are again excluded): the above (§ 346) quoted six-line love-song of the Black Knight, one of the songs of Troilus (v. 638-644, naturally a seven-line stanza), Chaucer's Wordes unto Adam (likewise a seven-line stanza), finally, the Roundel in the Parl. of Foules (cf. Parallel Text Edn. of Chaucer's Minor Poems, II., pp. 98-99 [Parl. 680-699]). The latter, of which only one MS. has preserved the complete form, may be quoted here



in conclusion of our sketch. We supplement the repetitions that are not indicated in the MSS., and, following Furnivall's example (Trial-Forewords, p. 54), insert the pronoun *thy* in the first line :

*Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe,  
That hast this wintres wedres overshake  
And driven away the large nightes blake.*

*Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hye on lofte,  
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake :  
Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe.*

*Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,  
Sith eech of hem recovered hath his make ;  
Ful blisful now they singen, whan they wake :*

*Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe,  
That hast this wintres wedres overshake  
And driven away the large nightes blake.*



## APPENDIX.

THE following corrections are taken from Holthausen's review of the second German edition of ten Brink's *Chaucer's Sprache und Verskunst*, in *Anglia*, Beiblatt, vol. XII. Nr. VIII. p. 237 ff. The article did not appear until after the proof-sheets of the translation had been passed for the press, or the emendations would have been inserted in the text.

- § 12 *a* Mdu *a* : labben etc., not Mlg.
- § 21 *e* (2) O.N. *ȝ* : ský, not Olg. éo, ío.
- § 30 *β* Mdu. origin, not Mlg.
- § 107 *a* O.N. burðr, not burđ.
- § 118 *a* (3) rarely *after* orig. í, not *before*.
- § 207 last line : nȝse, not nōse.
- § 207 (5) *n* is apocopated, not *u*.
- § 214 monthe, not monthe.

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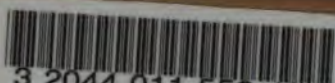












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